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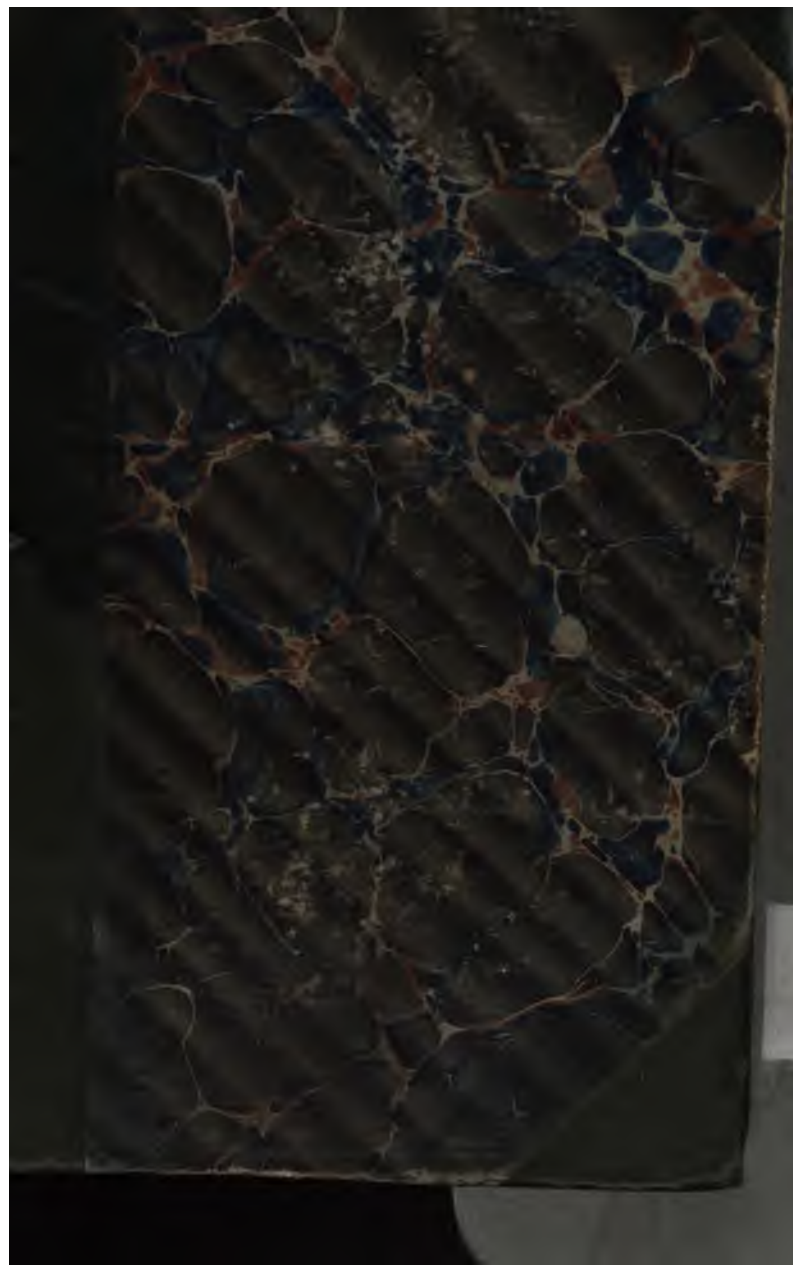
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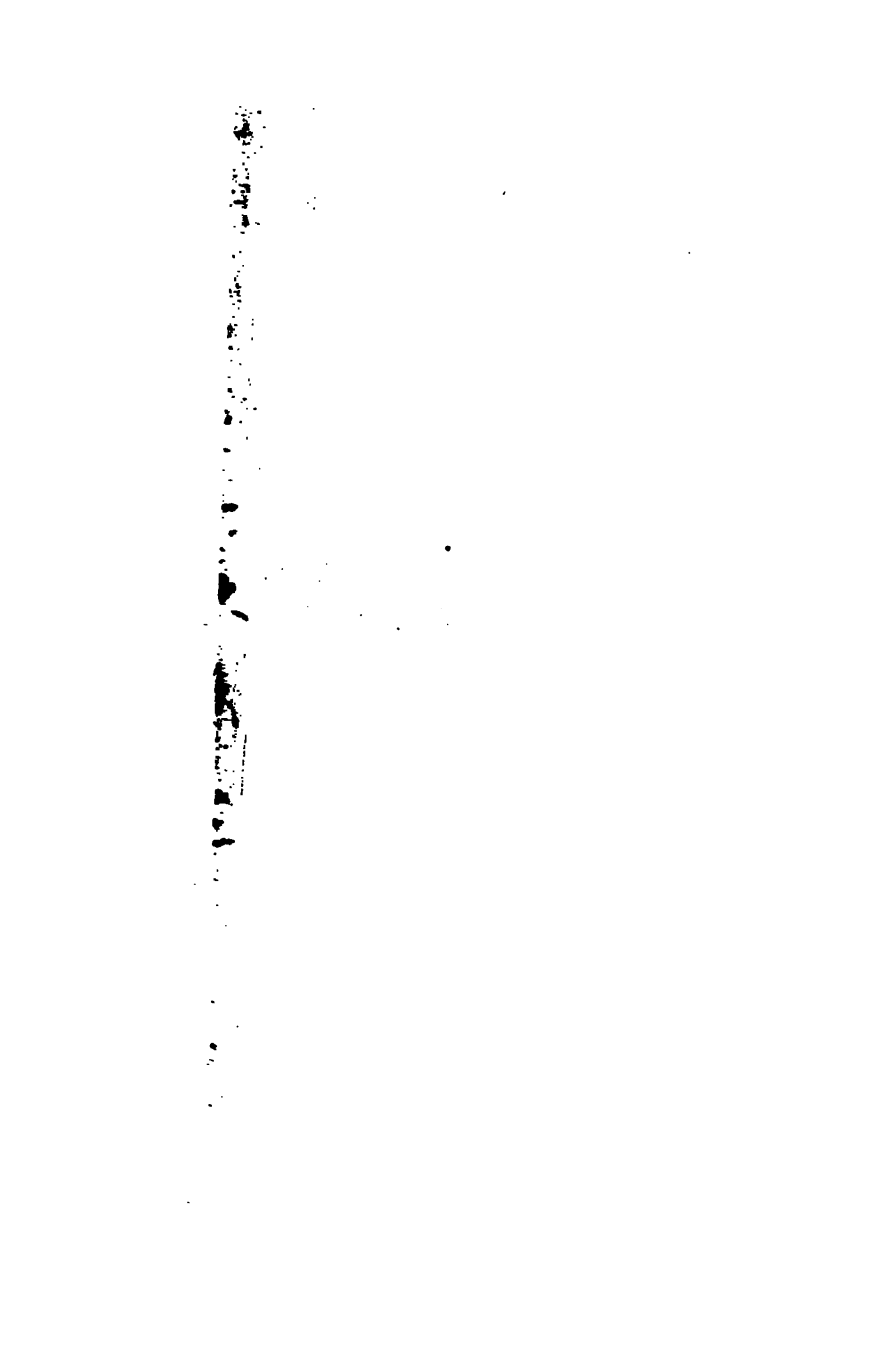
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EARLSWOOD:



A TALE

FOR THE TIMES, AND ALL TIME.

BY

CHARLOTTE ANLEY,

AUTHOR OF "MIRIAM," "INFLUENCE," ETC.



SECOND THOUSAND.

LONDON :
THOMAS HATCHARD, 187, PICCADILLY.
1853.

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE COUNTESS OF ELLESMERE;

AND TO HER REVERED MOTHER,

THE LADY CHARLOTTE GREVILLE;

This little Work

IS RESPECTFULLY, AND WITH PERMISSION, DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR,

AS

THE ONLY TRIBUTE IN HER POWER TO OFFER, OF DEEP

GRATITUDE AND LOVE,

TO

HER FRIEND AND BENEFACTRESS.



P R E F A C E.

ALTHOUGH quite aware that a preface is almost a superfluous appendage to any work, but more especially to one like "Earlswood," so seldom are such introductions read, and still more rarely digested; yet the Author feels compelled to say a few words in explanation of what might fairly become a subject of criticism, if not disarmed by reasons equally cogent for acknowledged error. Of the Tale now offered, as among the "small literature" of our country, whose public has hitherto been most kindly indulgent to the Author, we would briefly state that its leading incidents are founded upon *facts*; and, therefore, some difficulty has been necessarily encountered, in the endeavour to do

justice to those facts, without involving personal suspicion upon the real personages, in one of life's sad histories.

We have, then, for obvious reasons, in which the readers will sympathise, thrown the date as far back as circumstances would admit : in short, to the time when first the Oxford Tracts, so well known, by name at least, were first circulated from the press, and which were closely associated with the melancholy events recorded in these pages. But several works having been quoted, in reference to the subjects discussed, which are of far more recent date, the public may well claim apology for the many anachronisms which the Author found impossible to avoid in the progress of the work. She must, also, entreat her readers clearly to understand that, although truth blends largely with the fictitious portion of "Earlswood," *all* the characters which it delineates are *wholly imaginary* ; while the names, by no means the least vexatious part of an Author's task, are, either selected from those *common to many families*, unconnected with each other, or coined for the work, when at a loss to find safe substitutes. Of the subject chosen, the Author will make no

other comment, than to hope that abler hands will bring it forward in more intrinsic form, as one of no light moment in the present day. Few who read "Earlswood" will estimate the extreme difficulties which it has involved ; on the one hand, to touch wisely upon controversial points, while advancing nothing which the Holy Scriptures do not fully authorise and prove ; on the other, to expose an anti-Christian *system*, in that spirit of individual love, which "hoping all things," "covereth a multitude of sins."

C. A.

Sidcup, Kent.

June 12, 1852.



EARLSWOOD;

OR,

Lights and Shadows of the Anglican Church.

CHAPTER I.

It was an old man's tale, but oft mine eyes did weep,
To think of woes that haunted me in sleep.
Go, ponder well the lessons which its truths impart,
Lean not on man, but give to God thine heart;
And when thou doubtest, ask His Spirit's aid,
To fix thy faith on what the *Lord has said!*

A TRAVELLER, who had wandered far from his intended route among the richest localities of North Devonshire, suddenly found himself on the verge of a steep declivity, overlooking one of the most lovely views which could arrest the eye of man; and there he paused, both to contemplate the scene, and to

await some passer-by, who would inform him of his lost track. An aged man, bearing the appearance of a respectable yeoman, stood, not far distant, leaning on a gate which separated the cliff from the descent, on which the rich ears of corn were fast ripening for harvest; and the traveller advanced towards him, not only to ask his way, but to inquire the name of a locality so full of sylvan interest. In reply to the last, the old man said, "If you mean the village down in yon valley, it is called Glencombe, sir; but the manor facing us is called Earlswood, to my mind the most beautiful spot in all England, even counting the king's own palace, though I don't mean to say the house itself is as grand as Windsor Castle." There was a tone of melancholy in the old man's voice, as he fixed a tearful gaze upon the objects thus so fondly eulogized, which attracting the curiosity of his listener, he inquired to whom the place belonged? The old man shook his head mournfully, and answered, "Time out of mind, sir, it has belonged to the Sydney family; and as to the matter of that, it does so still in a way, only the name seems gone, like the moon behind a cloud, as one may say. Sir Lennard Sydney, the last of the male line, left only two daughters. The eldest married Mr. Everard—that's our minister—and their son, when he comes of age, which please God won't be long first, is to take the family name, and inherit

great part of the property about here, except the manor of Earlswood, which was settled on his father and mother for their joint lives. He is a noble youth, bless him! well worthy of the old stock, but you see, sir, he can't take the old title too, so it all seems unnatural to me, somehow, who served his grandfather, and lived upon the property, man and boy, for well nigh seventy years." He paused, and then added, "But it is all deserted now, and, in my poor judgment, the sun has set upon its happiest days, for paradise itself could not be more blest than it was for many a long year."

"Nay, my good friend," returned the stranger, smiling, "you must not be an evil prophet. The sun of your own life is setting, and all things fading away with age; while to the next tenants of that fairy land it may be rising with many a ray of happiness as great as that which you have seen enjoyed."

"It may be so," said the old man, doubtfully; "but a blight passed over us which no earthly sun can drive away 'till all are gone who felt it."

"Where, then, is the present owner, that you say the place is now deserted?" asked the stranger.

"They're all gone abroad," answered the old man; "for Miss Alice was like a drooping lily, and they thought it best to try what the sunshine of another place would do for her; but she'll never

come back again ! I always said she was too good to live, though to be sure, as to the matter of that, her mother, who was an archangel over all other women, lived to see forty summers !” The venerable speaker wiped away the tears which, spite of every effort to restrain, trickled down his withered cheeks ; but he soon returned to the subject, heedless of a remark from his companion, who would fain have diverted him from it, as if it were a relief to speak of the sorrows which evidently oppressed him. “So you see, sir, although they may indeed some day come back to their own, yet to me it’s all one as if they were dead root and branch, for I don’t expect to see any of their sweet faces again ; it would be onreasonable if I did at eighty-five years of age, which I shall be, please God, I live ’till Michaelmas ; so that beautiful land there lies before me like a grave which draws me here, day after day, to think upon those that are gone, whether living or dead, for young and old have been to me dear as my own heart’s blood ! But,” added he, looking up with a glistening eye, “if they that are gone to heaven cannot come back to me, I will soon, through the mercy of God, go to them ; and my dear master too will surely go to that holy place, and meet many there, both rich and poor, whom he has led, ‘line upon line,’ to the knowledge of God, and to the salvation which is in Christ Jesus ! Young as he was

when first he came as curate to Glencombe—and a fine young man he was—he brought my old master, that's Sir Lennard Sydney, like a lamb to the fold, and there never has been in all the parish, a man, woman, or child, who hasn't loved him to the heart's core. Ay, even I can call to mind when I didn't care to hear the truth, for it touched me too hard, and yet I couldn't help liking *him*; and many is the time when I have come away from the church more angry than pleased, and almost made a vow, I would turn Methodist sooner than go again, and yet, for the life of me, I couldn't stay away, until, blessed be God, I got to love His holy word, even more than I loved the man who preached it. He was pretty tightish too with some of us; but, whether he had to praise or blame, it was all one; a word from his blessed lips always fell like love and charity; and he never preached to others what he didn't do himself, nor teach the poor what he didn't teach to his own kin; though to be sure, I never saw one belonging to him that wanted a tight word, nor a keen look, and you couldn't say that of every parson's family, whatever you might say of the parson himself. God bless him, and bring him back to us all, for we shall never see his like again on earth."

"But I hope, my friend," cheerfully exclaimed the stranger, "that you too will live to welcome back a master and minister so faithfully remembered."

“ Mine eyes will behold him no more, but God’s will be done !” replied the old man, mournfully, and he reverently raised his hat from his fine bald head, as for a moment he paused upon that sacred name ; then, making an effort to regain his habitual self-command and cheerfulness, he pressed the stranger to follow him down the dell, and rest awhile beneath his humble dwelling. To this the traveller gladly assented, anxious to hear more of details in which evidently centred the sole remaining interests of his venerable companion, and the close of that day had nearly waned into twilight before he sought to regain his homeward road, or to take leave of a spot whose associations never ceased to influence his mind through all the changes of a busy life, so mysteriously is accident, so called, often made the structure of a providential era in man’s existence.

The tale we now commence is founded on the records of a history in private life, the substance of which thus left upon the traveller’s heart impressions which we would fain extend for the instruction and warning of the young, now rising up to act a part in what, we believe, will prove an eventful crisis in the world’s history. Taking then our stand where we first found our traveller, we will give an outline of the landscape which arrested him, for nature is ever so intimately linked with life, that place and people can scarcely be separated from the

pages of an historian—we were going to say of romance, but our only romance is in those deep mysteries of real life which so often lend an imaginative character to events resulting in the deeper interests of man's inmost being.

On the brow of a hill, surrounded by scenery which, we have said, attracted the admiration of one who lingered to gaze upon its glorious arena, stood a mansion, whose architecture bore date of years gone by, although its massive walls and well framed windows were little affected in their strength or appearance by the storms of two centuries. Although by no means large in its dimensions as a building, nor extensive in its territorial boundary, Earlswood nevertheless told its own history, so far, that it was the inheritance of a good old English family of aristocratic descent, for nothing was wanting to give it the appearance both of comfort and refinement, blending art with its own natural advantages. A broad terrace walk ran the whole length of the rear, terminating at each end with a flight of stone steps, surmounted by a beautifully sculptured lion couchant, so common at the period in which the whole was built. A sloping lawn extended from this to the river side, but was laid out in more modern fashion, retaining somewhat of the stiffness which characterised a remoter date, but was varied by beautiful groups of evergreen shrubs, and gemmed with

smaller beds of choicest plants, yielding to each passing season its own peculiar tribute. At the extremity of the lawn glided the silver waters of a wide rippling stream, which, dancing over its pebbly bed, might sometimes be heard like fairy music murmuring its soft vespers through the stillness of evening, while rapidly winding its onward way to the sweet valley of Glencombe, of which Earlswood was the manor house, and once the residence of its patron lord, Sir Leonard Sydney. On the opposite side of the stream were low irregular cliffs, covered with lichens and wild creepers of every shade and hue, and beyond these arose the richly wooded hills, that bounded the horizon of Earlswood on the south; and on its northern front a crescent-formed avenue of splendid elms, sycamores, and lime trees, was its only entrance from the public road. Well might a thoughtful mind look upon a scene so fair, and yearn for the peacefulness of its deep retirement. Far removed from the din and turmoil of cities, the soul seeking rest might fancy its home was surely there, an unblighted Eden of a troublous world; but, alas! wherever man himself exists there must be struggle with the destinies of mortal life, however remote may be the scene of his endurance, or rich in natural beauties the stage of his achievements.

Some years previously to the time in which our tale opens, Earlswood had passed through a long

line of ancestry to the rector's wife, co-heiress of the last baronet of a name extinct by her father's death; two daughters only surviving him to share the property so long entailed from father to son of his now by-gone race. The sisters were both lovely in person, and cultivated in mind, but were very unlike in character, save in that deep affection which closely united them to each other from the earliest years of a motherless childhood. The calm reflective mind of the elder harmonized well with the ardent imagination of the high-spirited younger; the former, by a peculiar combination of strength and gentleness, ever holding influence over the impulsive nature of her sister; while, perhaps, the brilliant energies of the other drew forth the powers of the sweet-minded Alice, whose natural sympathies, if fostered in an atmosphere more like themselves, might have become enfeebled into a too morbid susceptibility. But sisters well dowered as these were seldom walk together beyond the threshold of their womanhood, and it is the endearing associations of life's bright spring time, that can never find its parallel again, which so often binds the heart of sister to sister with a tie no after storm can ever rend asunder. The groundwork of such love must be indeed a hallowed principle, unmixed by those worldly jealousies which too often poison the pure spring of innocent affections; but such passions had

no part in the trusting confidence of Alice and Catherine Sydney ; each loved the other apart from self, and had pride only in the superior merits of her sister. As it is not, however, *their* history which will employ the author's pen in the narrative before us, it is needless to dwell upon the advantages under which all that was fairest in such characters was cherished and improved. The hand which directed them gathered her own lessons from above. The motherless girls were trained by a widowed relative of their generous father, whose good sense, and yet better principles, valued the richly cultivated mind and religious influence of such a guide too highly to interfere with her guardianship. Thus early tutored for life's probation, these twins in heart, on the same morning, left their happy maiden home, each with a father's blessing on their bridal vows.

The lovely Catherine in her twentieth year became the wife of a young nobleman, and Alice, scarcely of age, true to her native character, had chosen for herself a lowlier allotment, if lowlier that could be called which united her to one far superior in all but the shallow advantages of rank and wealth to others who had vainly sought her love. She, too, married the object of her first and best affections, the Curate of Glencombe, to whom Sir Lennard Sydney subsequently presented the living in token of his own esteem and perfect approbation of his

daughter's hallowed choice, notwithstanding that he would at first have coveted for her a more exalted alliance. But he had loved his children too dearly, ay, too wisely loved them, to thwart a good and generous preference ; and although, as a man of the world, he was more favourably disposed to the marriage of his younger child, he had eventually offered no obstacle to that of his gentle Alice ; persuaded more perhaps by the eloquent pleadings of her sister, than by his own unbiassed judgment, that to one of her prevailing character of mind and disposition there would be more real and lasting happiness in the quiet life of domestic retirement, while he admitted that no man was more calculated to secure her this than the highly cultivated and noble-minded Harcourt Everard. Well would it be for thousands, if parents would always thus yield the projects of a merely selfish ambition to the sterling welfare of their offspring, where no real inequality of rank or station exists. Many a young and gentle being would perchance with a higher and holier aim strive to become a blessing within the sphere of her influence, who, on the other hand, blighted in her first and fairest hope on earth, by the stern dictates of a worldly pride, is chilled into apathy, and walks coldly on, as best she may, through the after duties of a spiritless existence, without aim or purpose beyond the passing interests of a passing world ! Sir Len-

nard Sydney found no cause to regret his parental indulgence. In after years, his old age was solaced by the filial attentions of Alice and her excellent husband, through whose ministrations he had received that gospel which is the "power of God unto salvation;" and when at last his eyes were closed by the gentle hand of his firstborn, his soul realised in death the hope of a blessed immortality through Jesus, the life and resurrection of his new-born spirit.

Sir Lennard Sydney had outlived his youngest daughter, who like a flower had been cut down in the bloom of a brief but happy life, by one of those appalling accidents which sometimes throw a tragic interest over the history of real life. The young Countess of Errisford had been killed by the overthrow of a phaeton, drawn by two spirited Arabian ponies, which Lord Errisford was driving, doubting nothing of his perfect control over animals which had ever before been obedient to his slightest touch; but just as he was curbing them to a more gentle pace for a steep and rather perilous descent lying before them, the sudden rush of a noble hound through the hedge into the road, so startled the high-mettled creatures, that they darted off at a furious speed, and all efforts to restrain their mad career proved wholly abortive. Lord Errisford was at once aware of his imminent danger, but, with great self-possession, he

endeavoured to keep the centre of the road, encouraging his terrified wife to retain her seat as the only chance of safety ; but scarcely had they reached midway the frightful declivity, when dashing over some loose fragments of rock, the carriage was overthrown, and Lady Errisford falling violently against them, a splintered stone struck her temple, and she never spoke again ! Death was instantaneous ; but far worse than death was the living agony of her husband, in whose heart she had lived a worshipped idol. He raised the angel form of his departed wife to his faithful bosom, as if by its own warmth he could stay the vital spark. But all in vain ! the “silver cord” was snapped for ever, and the imprisoned soul let loose, to rise immortal in the world above ! We will not dwell upon the mournful sequel of this tragic tale. Lord Errisford spoke not for many days, in his unutterable anguish ; he seemed to court death by grief, refusing to be comforted, but at last the mental storm subsided, for nature could bear no more, and better principles prevailing over the weakness of despair, he remembered that yet one living tie remained to claim a father’s protecting love, and for the sake of his cherub child, he aroused those energies of a powerful mind which had been so fearfully unmanned. Nevertheless, while struggling to overcome all selfish grief, he felt that he could no longer remain in his now desolated home,

where everything which met his eye served but to revive the memories of a past idolatry, now so unspeakably painful to endure. Morally excellent in character and purpose, the unhappy earl knew little of that Rock on which his soul might have found refuge amidst the tempest of its inward sorrow; but the world had been his heart's "abiding place," and now earth could give no rest to the weary sufferer. He felt, too, that his joyless home was no longer one in which to rear that bright and innocent being who was its only sunbeam, and although he dearly loved his motherless child, he knew a woman's heart could alone fulfil the high mission of her education. And who could so well undertake that holy charge as *she*—the faithful sister of his lost Catherine? Alice had herself desired this, yet dared not ask the boon now freely offered; but, oh! how gratefully did *she* receive the sacred trust, and soon the Lady Gertrude Austyn, then scarcely four years old, became a cherished gem among the treasures of her household. Lord Errisford, having thus consigned his only child to Mrs. Everard's care, sorrowfully took leave of all he loved on earth, to seek in foreign scenes some change from his lonely wretchedness; and subsequently giving himself up to the absorbing interest of diplomacy, he became a devoted statesman, and nobly served his country and his king; for at the time of which we write, the star had not yet risen

above the horizon of sovereignty which now shines upon the British throne. Oh! long may its light be there, to bless with its gentle sway our favoured land and people. Long may our Queen be spared as head supreme of Church and State, for sure we are that she will defend the holy rights of the one as Vicegerent of the King of kings, and maintain the other intrusted to her royal keeping by Him, the Lord of lords!

On the character of Mr. Everard we must dwell in longer detail as a prominent one in the history which these pages will record. Although no scion of nobility, he was descended from a good old patrician family: neither was his father what could be called a wealthy man, and he gave little more to his son than a good name, a liberal education, and principles grounded on "the wisdom which is from above." He passed through his college career at Oxford with credit to himself, both as a scholar and a man, and took orders under a yet higher teaching, fully impressed with the deep and solemn responsibility of those who subscribe to ordination vows, such as the Church of England requires from her sons; and before he bound himself by these to a profession so sacred, he sought Divine guidance, while earnestly praying that if indeed it might be his vocation, the Holy Spirit would sanctify him for the office, to which he must protest to have been thus especially called.

He examined his own heart by this searching test, and asked if he could truly surrender himself to a separation from the world, not only from its dissipating, but its frivolous pleasures, and undertake the teaching of souls as a trust committed to him by the great "Shepherd of Israel," who would require of him a faithful, and unflinching discharge of his holy stewardship. Such was the spirit in which Harcourt Everard, after mature and prayerful deliberation, entered upon the sacred ministry of our Church; and immediately after his ordination, he entered upon the charge of a curacy in a large and populous district, including many of the rich and influential. Although so young, he soon became a popular preacher. The church filled with hearers, who listened with a charmed ear to the eloquence of his earnest appeals, his deep voice harmonizing equally with the force and tenderness of Holy Scripture; but many a heart responded to the "loveliness of the song," which nevertheless returned to the world, worshipping the man rather than receiving the "word of God," which can alone "open the door of faith" to the unbelieving, and give life to the "dead in trespasses and sins." But, even through this dangerous ordeal,—so fatal to many a young and gifted minister, who enters upon his work with an earnest desire to "think nothing of himself," yet soon becomes the willing

idol of an admiring congregation,—even through this young Everard passed unscathed, and pressing on to a holier aim, he but the more earnestly exalted Christ, cutting down every avenue to the pride of man, while laying bare the hidden sins, and unbelief, and perverseness of the unregenerate soul ; and then, with all the force of an apostolic messenger, he meekly exhorted to repentance, and promised pardon to the renewed and contrite heart. Such preaching could not be without its fruits, and some there were who heard the word, and loved it for the word's own sake. While thus preaching to others, Mr. Everard's own walk was one of watchfulness and prayer. With a righteous zeal, tempered by a naturally sound judgment, and a self-renunciation in duties calling forth the best feelings of the heart, and the strongest powers of intellect, he became more and more an example as well as guide to all within the province of his ministrations. We say not that, unlike other men, he had no sins to mourn, no conflicts to endure, no passions to subdue. We say not that he never yearned for more liberty in things which naturally he loved, nor often grew "wearied in well doing : " that no evil tempers rose as a cloud betwixt his soul and God ; that pride never took the place of meekness ; anger the place of charity ; that unhallowed wishes never cast a shade upon his purer thoughts ; but we do say, that in all

these things he struggled in earnest prayer to overcome, to "fight the good fight" against unholy desires ; to restrain the evil, and constrain to good ; and, by the grace of God, whenever his soul thus wrestled in such unequal warfare, the Lord was his shield, the "sword of the Spirit" his only weapon ; and he *did* obtain the victory over whatever had tempted or betrayed him. But "who can know the things of a man, save the spirit of man that is within him?" The eye of others sees not these wrestlings of nature against faith ; the ear of man hears not the silent utterings of the unseen heart ; its tears are shed in secret, within the soul's Gethsemane ; the "the still small voice" sends back no echo of its mute upbraidings : God is their only witness, and Christ the only Intercessor betwixt the sinner and the sinner's Judge, while silently the unction of renewing grace is poured down upon the penitent by that holy breath, which, like the wind, "bloweth where it listeth, but who can tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth."

A few months changed the destiny of Mr. Everard, and removed him to the labours of a far different sphere. The good old Rector of Glencombe, fast declining in years and strength, feeling himself no longer competent to fulfil unaided, the duties of his office, solicited his young friend Everard to become his curate and his guest. He had loved his father

with a brother's love, and he now yearned to adopt the son whose character had been so well proved. To this arrangement, his patron friend, Sir Lennard Sydney, raised no objection, and gratefully did Mr. Everard himself embrace the generous offer, which not only advanced his worldly interests, but placed him in a position far more congenial to his natural tastes and habits than the populous and wealthy district of his first charge; as soon, therefore, as his year's probation had been fulfilled, he received full ordination, and removed to Glencombe, a highly picturesque, though not an extensive village. It was too retired from the usual haunts of pleasure-seeking travellers to be much known beyond its own little world, for railroads had not then cut up the beautiful "nooks and corners of England" into iron pathways for the lightning transit of commerce, and all its peace-destroying traffic. It lay deep in the bosom of a fertile valley, watered by the Lynn, which, like a silver serpent, glided gracefully along the windings of that romantic glen, fertilizing its banks, and giving sustenance to a luxuriant vegetation. Rising above this vale of beauty, were clustered the simple dwellings of some scattered hamlets which might here and there be seen in more distant perspective, and higher yet, upon a sloping ground, rose the church, with its ivy-covered tower, behind which a thickly wooded ascent led to the summit of magni-

ificent cliffs. Earlswood completed the landscape, as it stood in its own imposing solitude, the rich woods by which it was partly screened, receiving the lights and shadows of every passing sunbeam, tinting the massive background with the rich colouring of its variegated foliage. To the right of the church was the rectory, a low, long range of building, according to the fashion of a somewhat antiquated architecture; with a porch tastefully adorned with trellis, to support the light branches of aspiring roses, and the tendrils of the more slender clematis and jasmine. The deep set windows were latticed; and here too sweet flowers arched carelessly around, to throw their pure fragrance within. A green-house terminated the range, and a well-cultivated garden, an orchard, with dove-cots and beehives, and roosts for the winged favourites of this Eden-like retreat, composed the homestead of the village rector.

It was here that Mr. Everard entered upon the more responsible ministrations of a clergyman, for although still only ostensibly a curate, the increasing infirmities of the venerable incumbent soon threw upon this coadjutor, all the more onerous duties of his charge. And here, too, the intimacy was formed between himself and the family of Earlswood, who soon learnt to estimate his uncompromising, yet gentle character, while, notwithstanding the influence which his own principles acquired over the domestic

habits of his aristocratic friends, it was exercised with a humility which rather trembled under a sense of the responsibility it entailed, than excited any self-importance or arrogant assumption of power ; while this very sense of his peculiar position gave to his intercourse, especially with the beautiful sisters of Earlswood, a character of unobtrusive dignity and respect, which only the more raised him in their confidence and esteem. It was scarcely possible, however, to maintain so intimate a position, without fully estimating the danger of loving where, perhaps, his love could never be returned, or if returned, could only be won by an abuse of trust, so unreservedly manifested towards him by the father, from which his own soul recoiled. But, at length, he *did love*, deeply and devotedly, even while the unconscious Alice saw nothing to indicate a more than brotherly regard ; for, with a determination consistent with his principles, he resolved never to betray his affection under circumstances of such unequal wealth ; and so successfully did he conceal from the eye of others this hidden secret of his soul, that it was rumoured and suspected, some other loved and absent one bound him to that apparently cold regard which ever marked his conduct towards both Alice and the lively Catherine, when in their familiar moments he was most warned against the indulgence of a hope he dared not, would not cherish. Singu-

larly free from vanity, he saw not the probability of a reciprocal danger ; but affections cannot be limited by rule, and often times the more hedged round by opposing obstacles, the deeper is their root within a woman's generous heart. Unconscious as Alice Sydney was of her own feelings towards one so congenial to herself, so realising all that she imagined of a pure and intellectual character, she could scarcely long remain insensible of the influence which such a man was sure to obtain over her young and guileless heart ; and she too at last loved deeply ; but it was with a silent surrender, struggling against itself to overcome a hope which she little thought had just ground of existence ; and but for the penetration of the bright and true-hearted Catherine, the destinies of these two high-minded lovers had been among the secret annals of happiness sacrificed to the dictates of a pure and uncompromising conscience, each acting on the same holy motive of selfishness subservient to the higher claims of Christian integrity. Suddenly, however, did conviction of her sister's unacknowledged struggle flash upon the loving Catherine ; and from that moment she gave her whole earnest mind to penetrate the unsuspected feelings of him who had thus unwarily won the heart of Alice, to the exclusion of all other lovers ; for she knew that heart too well not to comprehend the depth of an affection rooted, as in her sister's mind it really

was, on the firm basis of esteem. "Yes," she ejaculated to herself, "Alice will marry Everard, or remain for ever as she is. I wonder if, indeed, he is engaged to another, as rumour asserts to be the case? 'Tis strange he has never confided to us his betrothment, if betrothed he be; but, Master Everard, woman's wit shall outwit your reserve, depend upon it, and your secret shall be mine before many days be past." Her feelings were now excited in her sister's cause, a cause too deeply serious to lead even to a thoughtless taunt, for with all her girlish exuberance of animation, there was a depth of integrity and firmness of purpose in her character, which often led her to resolve and act upon a right judgment where the subject was important, surprising even to some who knew her best; so frequently, in matters of less moment, was she a heedless, because an impulsive girl. She now, as she sat alone, reflected that Mr. Everard was poor in the world's estimation, and her sister the reverse; and this she felt might, in his upright mind, be a motive for caution in a matter so eminently touching the happiness of her confiding father. "Then," thought she, "he is so provokingly free from vanity, that he underrates himself even in personal advantages, which most men are prone enough to exaggerate a prize." She blushed and smiled, as she remembered her own handsome lover, and the current of her mind thus

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turned to a more selfish channel, she arose and hastily left her room, and her solitude. She found Alice, too, had been alone, and in her quiet serenity was sketching a beautiful water lily, just gathered, as the first of its kind in bloom. Catherine sat down by her side, and looking earnestly on the calm expression of that downcast face, she felt how inexpressibly dear to her was Alice in her maiden sorrow: a sorrow, the mere suspicion of which had already cast a shade on her own more joyous nature. A deep sigh broke the unusual silence, and Alice surprised, suddenly looked up, exclaiming, "Dear Kate, what can you be thinking of to wake up such a sigh, even from your light heart?"

"Oh! sister mine," said Catherine, laughing, "I was musing on deeper things than your philosophy dreams of. I was thinking what strange vagaries fate sometimes plays with us, poor silly girls, and wondering what your part will be in the great drama of life! *Mine* must be—comedy, if I personate a heroine at all, and poor Errisford, perchance, will all his lifetime have to act, 'Taming the Shrew,' for I have a wayward will by nature, and cannot, for the life of me, fancy myself anything but a Catherine in good earnest: so I seriously think," added she, with assumed gravity, "that I should do well at once to set my Petruchio free of his threatened fate! Now you, Alice, would grace the household of a

Solon, could we but find one wise enough in these degenerate days, to win a love such as your sweet love would be, if mated with a heart worthy of such high destiny."

Catherine spoke as if in *badinage*, but fixed an anxious look on her sister, who, deeply blushing, renewed her drawing, and calmly answered, "Dearest Kate, how can you trifle with such serious things. Mar not your own bright path, by assuming a wilfulness unjust both to yourself and Lord Errisford. As for me, I shall never leave papa."

"In other words, you mean to say that you will never marry ; rather a bold resolution for a girl of nineteen ; but after all, Alice, you have a hard heart, for I do believe you have never been in love."

At this moment Mr. Everard was announced, and both sisters intuitively felt that his visit was, for once, ill-timed. Alice turned pale, but with her usual self-command, she met him with a friendly welcome, while Catherine, less at ease, blushed deeply, and feeling the awkwardness of her conscious confusion, she burst into a merry laugh, exclaiming, "Oh ! Mr. Everard, you are just come in time. Alice has been lecturing me so unmercifully, that, indeed, you must give me absolution, or I know not what penance she will inflict ; all because I was proposing to act a play, a thing which she eschews ; so she thundered forth an anathema, even before I

had catalogued my dramatis personæ, which, by-the-by, would have included you as Benedict ; and yet, with the same breath, she twitted me for throwing my Petruchio off the stage, that I might reign for ever ‘ Catherine the untamed.’ ”

Alice looked up, fixed a fond, reproachful glance upon the beautiful face of her sister, little dreaming of the strong under-current running beneath the stream of her sparkling wit. Mr. Everard sat down amused, and shaking his head, said “ The shrew must repent, before I can absolve.”

“ And confess to prove repentance, I suppose,” interrupted Catherine ; “ but take care, Mr. Father Confessor, lest I should cross-question you, and find that Benedict has a Beatrice in the hidden recesses of his marble heart. Alice has heard the tale from poor blind Annie, who sees with second sight, so of course we believe the vision, and are anxious to learn the name of this mysterious fair one.”

Mr. Everard, during the former part of this attack had reddened painfully ; but relieved by the latter charge, well aware of the report current of his supposed engagement, regained composure, assured that his secret was still safe ; yet, unconsciously, he glanced from Catherine to Alice, whose rich hair fell as a veil before her face, in bending lower to the seeming task, when such an expression of mingled tenderness and sorrow passed over his fine counte-

nance, as it was fixed intently upon the stooping Alice, that Catherine's quick eye saw at once the welcome truth revealed. All three remained for some moments in silence, as if each heart could bear no further jesting, and the conversation becoming more general, feelings soon subsided which had been so unexpectedly awakened.

A few days subsequently to this, Catherine wandered forth alone to one of her favourite haunts, and sat beneath a natural bower of wild honeysuckle, trailing from the overhanging branches of an adjacent tree, her young heart still oppressed with thoughts of her sister's coming destiny. "They love each other, I see that clearly as the light," she murmured to herself; "but Everard knows it not, and never will he confess his own, because he fancies that it cannot balance the paltry dower of my father's gold; as if the whole inheritance of Earlswood could for a moment be weighed in value with that priceless heart. And yet I dare not, would not compromise, my sweet, pure-minded Alice, whose secret lies like a sacred treasure, deep within her heart, into which she thinks that even my loving soul can never penetrate. Ah, me! why is it that when we seem so very happy, some drop of bitterness is sure to trickle down the path of life, and mingle with its brightest joys? But Everard wrongs papa. He has no sordid love of wealth, and Alice often wishes she were poor.

Yet how can I tell him this?" She mused again in silent thought, plucking the blue-bells at her side, while unconsciously tearing their fragile petals into atoms, she threw them idly to the air, then suddenly starting from her mossy seat, she exclaimed aloud, "There is the very man;" and running down the ascent, she joined Mr. Everard, as he entered the shady coppice which bordered the plantation, and led to the banks of the Lynn. He looked unusually thoughtful, and smiled almost sadly as the voice of Catherine aroused him from a painful reverie.

"Hail, worthy Thane," she exclaimed, forcing her spirits into a cheerfulness, she did not then quite feel. "I was just getting *ennuyé* with myself, and wishing for some kindred spirit to light upon my solitude; but lacking this you will be a substitute, and your gravity chime in well with my allegro; though I know not how it is, the music of my heart seems strangely falling into the *larghetto* to-day, and nature itself is all '*sotto voce*.' The morning's breeze has lulled into a low and sullen murmur; the very air teems with soft sounds of sadness. Listen to that mournful stream, how pensively its waters steal along, as if hushed into a sleep, and the hum of those winged creatures, floating on its tiny waves, had been its lullaby! The birds are the only merry things I've seen to-day, and your face reflects the whole catalogue of earth's solemnities."

“Then let us turn from earth to heavenly things, dear Catherine,” said Mr. Everard gently, as taking her hand upon his arm, he slowly led on towards the wood. “It is a sultry day, and we shall have a storm,” he continued ; “but these things come as lessons to teach the heart divine philosophy, that when we see life clouded by its own vicissitudes, and the waters of disappointment gathering round the timid soul, we may send forth the dove of peace to find a resting-place for our ark of hope, and welcome the olive branch she brings us from afar, in earnest of a coming salvation ! Catherine, you have a light heart, and long may it be a happy one ; but do you never think, while in the sunshine of your existence, that when it has reached its meridian, the shades of evening must follow in its wake ? or when you leave the haven of your parent home, to set sail upon the sea of life, will you go forth trusting to your own guidance, without a heavenly pilot to take you safely through the breakers ?”

“Oh ! no, Harcourt, for I well know what you mean,” feelingly replied Catherine. “Spoilt as I am ; prosperous in my every wish, I often feel the shadow of sin’s dark angel falling on my soul, and know how surely sorrow or repentance must be its avenger here. But think not the holy lessons of revealed truth, which you have taught so well, have fallen on a heedless ear, or on a hardened

heart. Come sorrow, or come joy, my Saviour is my only trust ; His blessed Spirit is my sole defence."

"Thank God for that, dear Catherine," earnestly exclaimed Mr. Everard ; "for it is difficult to realise our need of help when danger is far off, and scarcely possible to estimate the great gift of faith, when hope asks not yet an 'evidence of things unseen.'"

"Dear Harcourt," affectionately remarked Catherine, "you speak as if hope had been treacherous to you, in its promise of earthly things at least. Is Beatrice in fault?" she added archly ; "or what would be a more refined romance, are you both drooping under the hope deferred, based upon episcopalian preferment, always behind the date of a lover's claim?"

"Catherine," replied Mr. Everard, smiling sadly, "that is an idle village tale, too silly to be thought of. My heart is free as air, so far," he added, dropping his voice, "as the absence of all pledge or promise can make it so."

"Then something has disturbed you, I am sure," said his persevering companion, looking kindly towards him ; "and if not love, it must be money, the only two antagonists I ever heard of, to do battle against a true-hearted hope. Now love I cannot give you, but money is a different thing."

Mr. Everard smiled again, and shaking his head replied, "You are retaliating upon your father confessor with a vengeance, Catherine; but you are no alchymist in analysing the human heart. I repeat, that when we have trifled with hope, and struggled to lead her where she cannot follow, it is well the chase should be against us, and we must seek to regain her in more legitimate paths. Neither love nor money can purchase that peace which is in itself a priceless thing."

"True, Mr. Philosopher, and yet there is wisdom in the logic that money mars love, and therefore love too is a priceless thing, and may well trample on the gold which dares to weigh against its inestimable self. Now this, according to the rules of my witchcraft, unriddles a riddle, would you learn its solution?"

"Your are yourself a riddle," replied Mr. Everard, "and the key of your problem must remain in your own keeping."

"Then shall I unlock the mystery, and look into the secret of its magic? or do you fear a test which might reveal the folly of a self-inflicted martyrdom?"

Catherine spoke this so earnestly, and fixed such a penetrating glance upon the face of her companion, as now they stood upon the margin of the stream, that Mr. Everard could no longer misunderstand her

aim, and felt himself betrayed. With pale and quivering lips, at length he said, "Catherine, urge me no more. I murmur not, nor can you fathom the depth of that which is beyond the plummet line of even your penetration. Come, let us walk on, and talk of other things."

Catherine saw that the moment was now come when she must boldly act, or leave hope crushed indeed. Her cheek flushed with the beating of her heart, as she felt the delicacy of her task. What right had she to urge confession where her efforts were so repulsed? And yet it must be done at once, or the peace of her sister, and of him who stood beside her, be sacrificed for ever. She felt, too, that guileless as was her purpose, and pure her motive, yet she was too young and inexperienced to act wisely in such a mission. She stood for a moment in deep and earnest thought; but at length she suddenly laid her hand on Everard's arm, and almost inaudibly whispered, "Harcourt, you love my sister, and is Alice not worth the sacrifice of pride?"

"Pride!" exclaimed Mr. Everard, now thrown off his guard. "Oh, Catherine, how little do you know me! It is my pride that *I do love Alice*, with a love surpassing all expression! But it must not be; a barrier lies between us which nothing can break down. True, she is the guiding star of my heart's best affections, and in that heart she alone

will ever shine in the radiance of her angel light ; but nearer she can never be, and I must walk on through my earthly career lonely and unloved."

"And is my sister's paltry dower, then, the barrier which you fear?" asked Catherine; "how rarely does man estimate a woman's worth!"

"Catherine," said Mr. Everard, deeply pained, "that is a needless taunt. It is not her wealth that stands between us, but your father's known disapprobation of unequal marriages; and his generous confidence in me shall never be abused."

"Nay," retorted Catherine, regaining her arch and playful smile, "Alice herself methinks might make her own will in the matter a far more formidable barrier, than either of these antagonistic powers. She has vowed eternal maidenhood, and I solemnly declare to you, that no word or deed of her's has justified my own wild wish that you should be my brother."

"No," replied Mr. Everard, mournfully, "all is, I know, against me! Why, Catherine, have you thus sought to inflict an ordeal so painfully severe? You know my secret, and now must be its deepest grave."

"Indeed, then, I shall be nothing so sepulchral," replied Catherine, laughing. "Come, Harcourt, let us for once be true to hope, when she gives her anchor as our stay. It is not, believe me, the perish-

ing dust of earth, gold though it be, which gives inequality to marriage, and so my noble-hearted father will acknowledge, when he knows you thus dearly love his child; for it is the soul that marriage should unite for ever, and this has neither price nor limit. Your own is worthy to lead her's on to where earth's richest treasures cannot purchase entrance. In birth you are our equal; in mind, in intellect, in spiritual holiness, you are far above us all! On these my sweet sister will repose her maiden trust, if she be wise. Then leave me to break away the golden thread which your fancy has wrought into an iron chain; while you do all you can to break down the iceberg of her cold resolve to remain in single blessedness. I suppose," added the laughing Catherine, with a blush, "it is because she thinks one in a family quite enough for the rash, and perilous vow, which will soon bind her wild sister to the altar of a wife's worship."

Everard could not speak; he pressed her hand in grateful token of his confidence in her promise, and her purpose; then, overcome with the strange reverse of feeling, which in that hour he had sustained, he sank down upon the bank beside them, and covering his face with his hands, he wept such tears as joy sometimes wrings from the heart of man which sorrow has no power to draw. Catherine, too, shed tears; but they were as an April shower, and the

sunshine of her sweet smile soon recalled him to himself. He arose, and again offering his arm, turned towards the path leading back to Earlswood ; but his companion, with that delicacy inherent in a generous mind, declared it her will to walk home alone. "Now leave me, dear Harcourt," she said, "and go on your way rejoicing ; for, look up and see how the rays of that glorious sun are making way through the sultry mist, while the breeze is waking up again, to scatter all dull things away. Nature, in the visible, thus typifying the invisible world. Farewell ! With such an omen, will I hasten on my errand to tell Alice, that you have made her an offer, as the stupid world would call it ; but, I dare say, she will not have you after all." Then, waving her hand, and laughing archly as she turned away, Catherine was soon lost to sight amid the deep foliage of the wood.

Having entered into this early history of Mr. Everard's life, merely to elucidate the self-denying character of his religious faith, ever practically enforcing upon himself, even when most tempted to compromise them, the holy precepts which he taught to others, we will not intrude upon the sacredness of that evening's intercourse between the high-minded and devoted sisters, but only add that Everard's love for Alice was told with simple eloquence, and warmly espoused by Catherine, without betrayal of a single

word which could even remotely compromise her sister's peace of mind ; while, on the other hand, Alice, now justified by this unlooked-for claim upon her heart's surrender, poured into the ear of her faithful Catherine, the full and free confession of her own deep and long-imprisoned love. Nor was it until long after that sister's death that Alice knew the channel through which Everard and herself had been, apparently without an obstacle, united, so well had Catherine fulfilled her generous purpose, and won, with equal zeal and judgment, her father's willing consent. The sequel we have seen ; and through many years of uninterrupted happiness, Mr. Everard looked back upon his love of Alice as the best and brightest of his earthly blessings. Upon the death of his venerable rector, with whom he had continued to reside, and which occurred about two years subsequently to his marriage, Mr. Everard and Alice returned to Earlswood, to watch over the declining years of her father, and although there were not wanting some who, from mistaken prejudice or narrow-minded views, charged their faithful pastor with a worldly-minded ambition, on removal to his more exalted home, he still kept on the even current of his way ; and when that home became more essentially his own, as the dower of his beloved wife, their increased means but the more enlarged the sphere of their active benevolence, while


in their own establishment all needless expenditure and luxury gave place to the simple habits of a clergyman's family, mindful of the stewardship which must render back every intrusted talent, well improved, to the Lord whose they are. But, it is a false, if not an illiberal view, to accuse a clergyman of ambition or inconsistency, because he rejects not his appointed position, be it rich or poor—on the “mountain top,” or in the lowly valley of life. For, as we must “sow beside all waters,” so there must be husbandmen suited to each soil ; and many there are who, proud and unfruitful in their more limited sphere, would do well to imitate the meekness which often graces the Christian's lowly estimate of himself, where wealth, or rank, or power, are held only as proportionably greater responsibilities. It was a Magdalene who anointed the feet of her Lord ; but Joseph of Arimathea purchased his sepulchre ; neither the poverty of the one, nor the wealth of the other, gave value to these acts of a holy love : they are recorded as works of a living faith, and by such works, shall every man be judged.

CHAPTER II.

Lord, we have lost the loved one Thou hast taken,
But Thou can'st lead us where she rests on high.
"The spirit meek, and yet by pain unshaken,
The faith, the love, the lofty constancy;
Guide us where *these* are with our mother flown,
They were of Thee, and Thou hast claimed Thine own."

SOME years subsequently to the incidents which formed the introductory chapter of our tale, and towards the close of a sultry summer's evening, sat two young girls dressed in deepest mourning, beneath the wide-spreading branches of a noble oak, which stood in its majestic greatness the foremost of a group which formed a screen behind. Before the mossy mound on which the whole were raised, the view lay open to one of those beautiful and highly fertilized valleys which border the circuitous banks of the river Lynn, on one side of which, rose the steep cliffs, robed in their pendant foliage, the

waters of the stream reflecting the shadows of twilight at their feet ; while on the other, Earlswood, in its calm solitude completed the panorama on which those fair companions seemed so silently intent. The distant hills were lighted by the last beams of a setting sun, that fringed with its golden lustre the fleecy clouds, which had gathered, like attendant handmaids, round the glorious orb as it gently passed beneath the horizon, and then dissolved in lighter mists, throwing a softening haze over the veiled perspective, ere it was lost again in night. The evening star had just pierced through the firmament above, as a lamp to usher in the train of those celestial worlds which gem the concave arch of heaven, and, with clear but distant light, hold their appointed rule, each one telling of that omniscient and unslumbering Jehovah whose word called into being creation's wondrous universe ! All, too, on earth was hushed into the calm of declining day, when not a breath moves the silent air ; the sweet music of the birds alone, giving utterance to their vocal worship. A scene like this, might well inspire a thoughtful mind to take part with angels, and arch-angels, in spiritual adoration and thanksgiving ; or, lead one of more worldly bias into its own imaginative visions of unreal existence. Perhaps such reveries might be the themes of that silent abstraction in which the fair girls we have mentioned, while sit-



ting hand in hand, appeared so lost. At length the younger of the two suddenly exclaimed, "Oh, Alice! when shall I see this dear, calm home again? for it *is* my home, where all my best affections seem to nestle, when my heart returns to the sweet memory of its happy infancy! But, change as all else may do, we, Alice, can never cease to love each other; we who, through the years of our innocent childhood, slept like sisters, pillowed on each other's bosom, one in heart, twins in the deep abiding love of our angel mother! our pastimes and our prayers the same! Oh! would that time would come again, and we, my own dear Alice, still walk on our bright way together. I seem to leave all that is holy on leaving Earlswood; for the yearnings of my soul, which here aspire to heavenly things, recede like shadows and are soon forgotten, when the world and my dear fond father combine to make earth my Eden, and myself the shrine of his idolatry."

"Dearest Gertrude," replied Alice earnestly, "this can never be, if the temple of your own worship is in the heaven of heavens! It is not place that can limit spiritual aspirations, when the soul has once entered the illimitable. I, too, often feel earthly ties twining too closely round my heart, and dread the ordeal which is to try its faith by fruits; but I have been thinking, Gertrude, how wonderfully is the creation illustrative of the soul's history

in the economy of human life. I have been looking up at that resplendent sky, watching the fading away of its light, as the sun left it for awhile, and have seen it brightened again, as star after star sparkled through the darkening gloom. And then I have thought, how far darker still would be our inner world, if the 'Sun of righteousness' did not arise day by day, to light and guide us to the knowledge of salvation. For the soul, too, has its alternate day and night, and when that sun withdraws a 'little while' from the mental eye, the promises of a sure return, like stars, light the firmament of our faith's heaven. So will it ever be with us, dear Gertrude, if we will but be true to ourselves when the world is untrue to us. Oh! what a guardian link has been removed this day from the chain of our heart's home! When shall we see thy like again? my mother, my blessed mother!"

Alice Everard laid her pale face upon the bosom of her cousin, while the large tears fell freely but quietly from her aching eyes. The Lady Gertrude pressed her arm fondly round her, mingling her own tears in scarcely less deep or heart-felt sorrow. But Alice soon recovered herself, and said, "Let us weep no more, my Gertrude; I would not call her back from that holy Jerusalem, whose 'gates of pearl' she has now for ever entered! For the last hour I have felt as if my heart had winged its upward way,

once more to hold communion with herself. But, alas ! the mortal cannot pass the 'crystal sea' of immortality ; and yet, *she* may, perhaps, look down through space and bless us."

Both remained silent for a few minutes, Alice, in her turn, drawing her cousin tenderly to her side. At length she said, "Dear Gertrude, do not weep so bitterly. It was selfish in me to open the floodgate of our grief again ; but we have had such a happy, happy life, that we know not how to bear this one first real trial ; except indeed," she added affectionately, "that which was, perhaps, proportionate to our age, when, for the first time, you and I were parted from each other."

"And yet," said Gertrude, sadly looking up, "that bitter hour must be endured again. To part from you will seem like another death. Alice, how much I wish you could go with me !"

"And to me, dearest Gertrude," replied Alice, "our parting will be no light thing ; but I could not leave my precious father."

"And *would* not leave Ernest Willoughby, you mean to say," interrupted Gertrude, smiling through her tears.

"Nay," said Alice, blushing, "Ernest is but one of many whom I would not leave. My poor little Kate, and even my wild brother, could ill spare me from our now broken circle."

"Well," remarked Lady Gertrude, after a pause, "I suppose, we ever most perversely desire, that which alone we lack. I have neither mother, brother, nor sister, and for one of these how gladly would I resign wealth and rank, and other perishable possessions, and yet people tell me I have all that earth can give me to make me happy."

"You think so, Gertrude, because you can never make trial of the exchange," said Alice; "but say not you have no sister; we two, are now doubly bound to each other, for our mothers are together, and their own deep, devoted, sisterly love, must live again in us."

"But I am not like my mother, Alice, if half what I have heard of her was true; bright, beautiful, and wise; of merry heart, yet strong in her purposes of good. I think, I must have all her failings,—if she had any,—and lack most of her sweet virtues."

"We both lack much, dear Gertrude, to make us what our mothers were, and have many faults which they had not," said Alice, meekly; "but a fountain has been opened, and you well know where, from which we may draw, both pardon for sin, and strength for holier resolutions."

"Yes," answered Gertrude, reddening, "the water of holy baptism has, we may humbly believe, washed our mortal sins away, and made us free in-
..."

"Oh, Gertrude!"—earnestly exclaimed Alice, but she could say no more, for at that moment the Hall bell echoed through the stillness of the evening, to summon them for tea; and a young man, issuing from the house, ran down the lawn to meet the cousins, and giving an arm to each, he chided them for being out so late.

"We thought little of the hour, Ernest," said Lady Gertrude, "for time, seems to have had no herald of its going or coming, through this melancholy day."

They now entered the house together in silence, treading lightly, as if the sacredness of the dead were still there: for that morning only, had the mortal remains of Mrs. Everard, been consigned to their last resting-place in her father's family vault at Glencombe. Mr. Everard met his children for their evening meal, looking indeed, subdued by the deep sorrow of his bereavement; but he was calm and composed, supported by that perfect resignation to the will of God, which had ever been the ground of his unquestioning obedience. Alice placed his arm-chair to the table, and as he sat down, she fondly kissed his forehead; when, looking up at the sweet face which gazed upon his own in such expressive though silent sympathy, he gently pressed his hand upon her cheek, and whispered, "Bless thee, my child, my *only* Alice." A ready tear glistened in

the daughter's eye, but she checked the rising emotion ; and the little party being now assembled, each took their place, and while making an effort to be cheerful, the conversation became general. The young man, whom Lady Gertrude had addressed as Ernest, and who more especially devoted himself to Alice, talked incessantly, as with a tact peculiar to a sensitive mind, he led to subjects of sufficient interest to break the current of melancholy regrets, without grating upon the deeper feelings of recent sorrow.

And now the hour of evening prayer closed that painful day. The household were assembled, among whom the departed mistress was most gratefully revered ; and it was affecting to see how in their own bereavement, these servants suffered yet more for the affliction so deeply touching the domestic happiness of their beloved master and his children. Mr. Everard felt conscious of their affectionate sympathy, and fortified himself for the duty before him, while he opened the Holy Scriptures, where most abounding in words of consolation and promise, for that hour of mutual distress. Prayer is too sacred for detail, we will only add, that after uniting in the general confession of our beautiful liturgy, Mr. Everard poured forth such fervent supplication and thanksgiving, that, as he prayed, a strength was given him beyond his own, and he arose from his knees "cast down, but not destroyed," "sorrowing," yet

even in that bitter tribulation, rejoicing in the hope set before him.

The little Catherine, youngest of his now motherless ones, had fallen asleep at his side, wearied out by a long day of sorrow, so irksome to a child. Alice was moving towards her, when her father, waving her back with his hand, gently took the sleeper in his own arms, and carried her to her room. All understood the unexpressed motive of this tender act ; it was to prove, how far more than ever, he felt himself the guardian and the friend of his children, because he was now their only parent.

Thus passed that funeral day. Never had mortal gone to the grave more justly regretted, more honoured and beloved, than she, who was no longer linked to human ties. Her life had been one consistent preparation for the kingdom of heaven ; her benevolent heart ever responding to the claims of sympathy for others, and abounding in the "sweet charities" of Christian love ; so now after a long, but almost painless illness, she had died in peace, rejoicing with a "joy unspeakable, and full of glory." And, perhaps, with fewer trials than usually attach to human existence, she had been singularly blest and happy as daughter, wife, and mother ; nor was it the least of her blessings, although not immediately recognised when dispensed, that she was taken thus prematurely, according to the appointed

years of man's pilgrimage on earth, before she could even foresee the evils that were so soon to assail the faith and Church of her "fatherland."

The next morning each member of the household resumed the duties which had been disturbed by the week's calamity ; and if not restored to their wonted cheerfulness, all gloom was gone, and the gloomy accompaniments of death removed from the house of mourning. Mr. Everard resumed his pastoral duties, visiting the sick and poor. He went, indeed, his work with an aching heart, but not one rebellious murmur was there to quench the hope which rose above his grief. He was grateful for the abounding sympathy which had honoured the memory of his beloved wife, and led the greater part of his parishioners to follow as real mourners to her grave ; so having thanked them for this welcome tribute of their respect and love, he returned home through the most sequestered path, that in the calm solitude of nature's silent but emphatic fellowship, his overwrought mind might, once more, find repose and consolation from those holy reminiscences of Divine love, which, like links of light, draw the soul "from nature up to nature's God ;" from the seed "sown in weakness" here, to the seed "raised in power" hereafter ; from the grain "sown in tears" on earth, to the sheaves reaped with joy in heaven ! Absorbed in the contemplation of these hallowed

lessons, Mr. Everard heard no approaching footsteps, until, startled from his reveries by the sudden rush of little Catherine from her leafy hiding-place beside him, as he entered the wooded dell which skirted the lawn of Earlswood. She sprang into her father's arms, and nestled her head upon his neck, half playfully, yet with a conscious feeling of some undefined sorrow lingering in her heart. Mr. Everard pressed her fondly to his bosom, gratefully sensible of the many sweet blessings which yet linked him to earthly interests, for at that moment his two elder children and their cousin were seen, also hastening towards him, to welcome his return, and, grouping affectionately round him, each had some tale to tell, which called forth a smiling reply.

We must now turn to the portraiture of these younger branches of the Earlswood family. Algonon, the only son, was a fine animated boy of fifteen, inheriting much of his father's character, but with more natural buoyancy of spirits, probably arising very much from the different aspect of life which opened before them at the same age. The one feeling that on his own exertions, under God, he must be dependent for future well-being; the other without any such thought at all, knew himself to be the heir of his mother's inheritance, and that on coming of age he was to take the name of Sydney in addition to his own, with property which would

render him perfectly independent. But this excited, in his generous mind, neither selfishness nor pride. He would have been as well-pleased had he been portionless; so little value did he attach to such adventitious gifts; although this sense of independence left him without that self-reliant aim, which might have brought forth the full exercise of superior talents, and which, in his father's case, had been, humanly speaking, the mainspring of a persevering resolution to obtain honourable distinction; a motive eventually sanctified by religious aspiration. In Algernon, there appeared no predilection for the Church; his tastes were those rather of the patrician; history and political biography being his favourite subjects of study, while he early manifested a remarkable power of abstract reasoning. Nevertheless his principles were strictly those of religious tendency, and he had been too well trained in practical Christianity to leave it a mere nominal profession; for with all the exuberance of an ardent vivacity, his wildest mirth never trenched upon his deep reverence for holy things. But, as the eye looks through the colourless glass, and sees distant objects, gemmed with the radiant hues of prismatic reflexion, so did the active mind of Algernon look beyond the uneventful present to the bright realms of distant manhood, as it lay before his boyish fancy, gemmed with the heroic achievements of a glowing imagination;

yet, in all this, young as he was, he never lost sight of that far nobler aim, the achievements of the soul over the enchantments of the world,—that all his future actions as a man, might merge into the usefulness of a Christian benefactor. His fine open countenance was the perfect index of an ingenuous and intelligent mind. Dark chesnut hair curled upon his expansive forehead, and the glow of health gave an expression of beauty to a face not, perhaps, critically handsome. His disposition was generous and unselfish, and, although naturally of a quick temper, its flashes were of brief duration, for when led to pain another by a hasty word or an impetuous answer, he was never happy until he had made full reparation. But even such tempers were elicited only towards those of his own age. Reared to habits of perfect obedience and respect, he would himself have recoiled from violation of either to his parents; or equally so, from contradiction to their opinions or wishes, so sacred were they both in his heart's deep reverence and love; while his never failing deference towards those advanced in years, whether rich or poor, alone gave early proof of an amiable and well-ordered mind. Mothers would look upon the noble boy, and hold him up as an example to their own less tractable offspring; but such characters, even in early life, would not be so rare, as now unhappily they are, did parents look deeper than the surface, and with

firm, but judicious Christian discipline, eradicate the weeds which so rapidly germinate from the evil root of human nature, ere they gain strength to choke the good seed of better principles. "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child ;" but if the child's folly be indulged, as a thing rather to be laughed at than corrected, it will soon become the master passion, defying the restraints that might have curbed the wild career of tempers, which, in after years, exhibit themselves in so many shades of selfishness and self-importance, unpleasing, as they are unpromising.

The death of his mother, was to Algernon Everard, a shock to the hitherto unclouded happiness of his young life, which was felt in proportion to the strength of his naturally impetuous character ; but it was beautiful, now to see how every selfish indulgence of grief, gave place to an unremitting effort to enliven the solitude of his bereaved father, and to comfort his sisters in their common sorrow. Next to those of his own family, he loved nothing so well as Ernest Willoughby, who, as an elder brother, fully returned and estimated the warm affection of his youthful friend. The only child of a college chum of Mr. Everard, Ernest had, from earliest boyhood, been the frequent and familiar guest of the Earlswood family ; his own parents residing in India, where his father held a high civil appointment. Mr.

Everard had undertaken his guardianship, and had placed him under the charge of a neighbouring clergyman, with whom, at his father's expressed desire, he was to remain until prepared to enter Oxford, for the terms actually necessary for his ordination, should it continue his wish to become a minister of the Church of England; Earlswood being nominally his home whenever he was disengaged from other duties. His young heart had long been devoted to Alice; but it was only a few days previously to the death of Mrs. Everard, when in his twenty-first year, that he had seriously asked her own heart's return, that both, might receive the sanction and blessing of the dying mother, to their mutual affiancement. It was under such circumstances only, that consent had been given to an engagement thus, perhaps, prematurely pledged; but it was conditionally, that the future marriage should not take place until Alice was of age. Ernest was now at Earlswood for the long vacation, having passed only his first term at Oxford, and so far his character stood high in the estimation of all who knew him. He was steady beyond his years, although of a most joyous temperament, while his love for Alice was a high motive for continued well-doing. His imagination was susceptible to all that is great and sublime, both in natural and moral philosophy; but he was not without a tendency to that peculiar romance which leaves

the mind open to superstition, unless guarded by a strong judgment, capable of grappling with delusive fallacies. Against the dangers of such an imagination Mr. Everard had faithfully laboured to warn and fortify him ; and, may be, had he remained under his guardianship until his mind had attained a more matured discretion, this natural bias might have given place to a sounder reason ; but few at twenty acquire such, and where it exists in one so young, it is often falsely deemed rather a premature, than a valuable endowment. Nevertheless, Ernest was not without great good sense, which fully appreciated the character and judgment of Mr. Everard. He held him in deepest respect, and loved him as one who had fully replaced an absent father's care ; while his own amiable disposition and pleasing address, had endeared him to every member of that happy and united family. To little Catherine, its youngest and most privileged, he was an oracle to whom she invariably referred in all her childish joys and sorrows ; for merrily did he respond to the one, and patiently sympathise with the other. She was an artless, affectionate child, of six years old, the "household pet ;" and although, perhaps, more spoilt than the elder ones had been, in consequence of some tendency to delicate health, she was tractable and sweet-tempered, giving fair promise of future

talent and strength of character, so far as either could be developed at so early an age.

Of Alice, the eldest of the Earlswood family, we must give a more detailed sketch, together with that of the Lady Gertrude Austyn, who had for many years been like an engrafted flower among the fair blossoms of that happy "roof-tree." A few weeks only, younger than her cousin, the two girls had grown together, as twins in age and sisters in heart; fostered by the same maternal hand, and trained alike under the gentle guardianship of Mr. and Mrs. Everard, until, in her fourteenth year, the Lady Gertrude had been summoned to Italy, there to join her father, Lord Errisford, who, yearning for the companionship of his only child, had thus prematurely called her to enter upon the responsible position of her noble birthright. Notwithstanding such equal advantages, however, the cousins were unlike in character; their minds, although moulded on the same principles of education, had naturally received a different bias, each one, perhaps, inheriting from her mother those peculiarities which had given to the sisters of Earlswood, distinct characteristics that were yet more prominent in their offspring. Both were, however, extremely affectionate in disposition; deeply attached to each other; and when, in their seventeenth year, the illness of Mrs. Everard had re-

called Lady Gertrude to England, her subsequent death had united them more closely than ever by a fellowship in one deep and mutual sorrow. In person they were also unlike. Alice was fair, almost to delicacy ; but luxuriant hair, of a rich golden brown, and great elasticity of movement, indicated a healthy, if not a robust, constitution. Her figure was peculiarly graceful, although not critically perfect ; her oval face, and soft hazel eyes, which expressed so much of gentleness in her mother's countenance, were in Alice heightened by a greater depth of thought ; and although she, too, was gentle in disposition, there was an unflinching firmness in her character, which sometimes, limited the finer elements of a generous mind, to the too stringent rules of judgment. Her own standard of goodness was a high one, and to attain this, she consistently struggled against those infirmities of human nature, which ever war with holier principles ; and had the gentler charities, which in her mother so pre-eminently tempered the asperities of a severe judgment, blended equally in the balance of her own, Alice might have realized in herself, the perfection to which she aspired ; but the very absence of this perfect union of mercy and truth, gave weight to the only faults in her beautiful character which was discernible to the human eye, and *that*, perhaps, only when peculiar circumstances drew it forth to the surface. Her

affections were deep and lasting. Where she loved, it was with the faithfulness of a disinterested and generous heart, confiding with a pure and perfect trust which know no jealous fear. Such love she had bestowed on Ernest Willoughby ; but even this, was secondary to that beautiful and hallowed affection, with which she venerated and almost idolized her father. Her friendships were few beyond her own home, and never hastily formed ; the most intimate was that, which had grown with her growth, towards her cousin Gertrude, although, as is so often the case, no similarity of character had united them ; the only ground on which both could be said essentially to blend, was a perfect unison, in warm and generous feelings.

The Lady Gertrude Austyn resembled her mother in person and general outline of character, inheriting her beauty and her impulsive nature ; but she had not her depth of mind, nor that acute perception which so rarely misled the judgment of Catherine Sydney. She imbibed, too, her imaginative and playful fancy, but in Gertrude it was more tinged with romance, exaggerating the most common events of life, while, wanting discrimination, she was frequently influenced rather by the impulse of a sensitive and unsuspecting nature, than by the more sterling dictates of a reflective mind. She was talented and sweet-tempered, and although gifted

with almost surpassing beauty, she was singularly free from vanity and self-love, notwithstanding her peculiar position as an idolized and only child, denied nothing which could gratify her wishes, or add to her happiness. Nor was it the least of her many good qualities, that, while in her father's house she was surrounded by the dangerous accompaniments of wealth and rank, and flattered by all who either really admired, or inwardly envied her, she had never been alienated from that grateful attachment to the beloved guardians of her infancy, and companions of her childhood, which fast bound her sweetest memories within the cherished circle of her Earlswood home. Had she remained beneath its roof until her mind had been matured in those holy principles, the impression of which was never eradicated, she might have been spared from many after sorrows, which sprang from a will, left too soon to its own untutored guidance, just at the age when character receives its most important bias ; and yet it was only marvellous how generally that will was governed by the better feelings of religious principle. Yes, *grace* had watched over the seed sown within the infant soul, until the Spirit of God should breathe upon it the life, which, in due time, might bring forth fruits of holiness and peace. So, "the bread cast upon the waters was found after many days."

The beauty of Lady Gertrude was of a character

the most difficult to describe. It lay not merely in the symmetry of form,—in the chiselled outline of delicate features; nor in the tinting of a faultless complexion. It was in the ever-varying expression of a countenance, on which the soul poured forth its flood of light, each joyous thought dimpling the lovely face in smiles; or sadder ones, rising like shadows from the blue and deep-set eyes, giving utterance to the heart's sweet sympathies, in language more eloquent than words, while the long, dark lashes, deepened the expression, whether of her mirth or melancholy.

Such were the friends, who, with hearts entwined around each other, in the guileless trust of young and inexperienced life, set sail together in the frail bark of unsuspecting hope, little dreaming of the wild waves, which, alas! in after years too often rise and dash against such hope, wrecking, perhaps for ever, the trusting confidence of hearts, once linked together by the sweet bonds of early friendship. Let such beware of even the first dark shadow of an evil spirit's approach, lest it should throw within the unguarded soul, seeds of doubt and suspicion, which are sure to germinate in proud and unfor-giving feelings, unless the holier influences of "righteousness and peace" are suffered to regain their gentle power, and restore the imperilled harmony before jealousies from without, even "sharper

than a serpent's tooth," can cut asunder the dear and cherished tie. For few there are among the living temples of humanity in whose bosoms are enshrined that angel spirit whose mission is to "pour oil" upon the elements of strife, and to send back the wandering dove, with its "olive leaf," to tell of subsiding waters. Alas! rather are there many whose feet are "swift in running" to carry poisoned words to the ears of such as are already embittered by mistrust and disappointment, that the separation may be complete, which, but for such messengers, might have been only like divided waters, soon rushing back to mingle in one stream again! Oh! if there be an evil over which angels might weep, it would be to see detracting envy at such work as this!

On the other hand, would that we had power to indite in characters of iron upon every young heart, a warning to beware of a first temptation to wrong a trusting spirit, let the traitor come in whatever form or guise he may, thus to unlink two loving hearts, and place discord in the breach;—to beware of a first deception, whether towards God or man, when Satan whispers that "the end sanctifies the means;" for it is the first unshrinking sin, which is ever the first compact with the "father of lies," to doubt Jehovah, and believe, "Ye shall not surely die;" and that drives the once ingenuous soul from the paradise of its fearless innocence, to hide from the all-seeing eye of

its Creator, within the shades of a fatal self-delusion. Oh ! could the feeble powers of an uninspired pen so illustrate the fearful results of "sin multiplying sin," that one soul might be led to flee from the evil thing, and to seek timely refuge from its baneful power, in the sure defence of a Saviour's watchful and omnipotent care, the labour of a lifetime would be too small a cost for such a priceless reward ! But this must be God's own work ; it can only be the author's prayer !

CHAPTER III.

"Joyous and far shall our wanderings be,
As the flight of birds, o'er the glittering sea ;
To the woods and the dingles where wild flowers grow,
We will bear no remembrance of earthly woe."

THE season was now fast advancing towards the close of summer, but the air was still soft, and the sun shone brightly as, rising towards a cloudless meridian, it threw its golden lustre on those exquisite objects of nature which give such wondrous colouring to the vegetation in its first decay. On the verge of the highest cliff which bounded the valley of Glencombe, now rich with its covering of purple heather, young Algernon Everard reposed in careless ease, lying full length among the wild thyme and moss which thickly carpeted the mound of earth thrown up by the encroaching roots of a splendid wych-elm, whose graceful branches canopied his luxurious couch. His head rested on one hand, while, with the other, he

kept down the leaves of an open volume, around which the light air sported, as if envious of its monopoly within the mind of the young student; so intently was he absorbed in the biography of a by-gone age; histories of Pitt, Sheridan, Burke, and other senators worthy of rivalry even with such, when depth of intellect, force of argument, and eloquence of expression, combined to give the British constitution a power which no other in the world could, or perhaps, even now, can command. Thus deeply absorbed, Algernon heard not the echoes that reverberated his name, until the merry voices which hailed him were too near to be longer unheeded. He started from his pleasant lair, and soon saw the beautiful face of Lady Gertrude, apparently rising from the earth itself, as she emerged from the steep and narrow path formed in the fissure of the riven rock, which brought her to the cliff, assisted by a long pole, so commonly in use among the pedestrians of North Devonshire. She sprang to her feet as she reached the summit, and rating the truant boy for his desertion, she assumed a pettish displeasure, exaggerating the trouble he had given to those who were silly enough to spend breath upon the errand of seeking him. "I would fain have left my young eagle in his eyrie here," she said, "but that I wanted a cavalier, to help me through the breaks and briers of a perilous excursion to the Waterfall."

"And yet," replied Algernon, laughing, "an eagle's eyrie is not considered the place of all others for a lamb to seek protection from briers, scarcely so fatal as its own talons."

"Now a truce, Algy, to your ungracious criticisms," said Gertrude. "Alas! how dense must be your brains not to discern the compliment thrown, as it seems, like 'a pearl' before one who sees no difference between a gem and a 'chuckie stane;' for were not the chivalrous knights, of a chivalrous age, often known to beauty by the name borrowed from the crest, proudly carried upon their plumed helmets? Yet, when I grace *you*, with that of a noble bird, you construe my heraldic metaphor into matter of fact, plebeian prose! You shall be no knight of mine, Sir Mole, so burrow in the earth again, and hide your unhelmeted head."

"Rather will I lay my lance in rest, and do battle with the bravest champion of the land, who shall dare to stand forth as godfather to such taunt as that, though spoken by the lips of an angel," said Algernon, in a tone of mock defiance, throwing down his glove before his cousin.

"Halloo!" exclaimed Ernest Willoughby, as, loosely followed by Alice, he sprang upon the platform of the rock; "who talks of doing battle with a lady in these degenerate days?"

"Nay," replied Gertrude, with a merry laugh,

"the glove lies there, in mortal defiance of any one, who will dare take it up as the champion of an insulted lady; since, according to the rules of chivalry, she cannot do battle for herself, like the fair Countess of Paris, in the days of Alexis Commenus. So, Ernest, you must take up our *gâge de guerre*, and see if you cannot unhorse that malapert boy."

"And yet," retorted Algernon, "Ernest himself, methinks, ought to be unhorsed, when the lady had to fly from his side, and seek protection from her eagle cavalier, whom, in her capricious fancy, she now likens to a stupid mole."

"That's true enough," exclaimed Gertrude, laughing again, and stooping to take up the glove herself. "A truce to you both, fair sirs; my mole has cast its skin, and turns out a lion in disguise; so, once more, I elect him my page, and replace the eagle crest of his race upon his brow."

"Nay," said Ernest, "praying you pardon, fair lady, I must now challenge explanation, who am accused of neglect towards my fair charge. Surely the Lady Gertrude needed no protecting arm, when mine was at her command, ever ready to do knightly *devoir* when a lady claims its aid."

"Yes," replied Gertrude, archly, "manfully indeed, was your *devoir* fulfilled in guiding me across that fragile bridge below, when, but for the aid of my good ash pole, I had been dancing under water with

the fairies of the stream, instead of basking, as happily I now am doing, in sunshine and free air; and all because you fancied the lady of your leal love too rashly perilled her own safety by walking on her way for five minutes without you! No, no, I will have no rival in protectorship through the dangerous passes of our pilgrimage, risking, as we must do, life and limb in wending our way through brambles and briers, or along precipices scarcely safe for the tread of a gazelle. Come, Algy, leave your book to the guardianship of that wych tree, while I intrust myself to your valiant care. Ernest and Alice leading on before us."

"Not so, fair ward," said Ernest, offering his arm to the Lady Gertrude; "your uncle gave you into my especial charge, and you must not visit my momentary offence so heavily, as to resign me for another protector. Alice shall go on with her brother, as she is more accustomed to these wild haunts, and you shall remain my only charge."

"Now, patience forbid!" exclaimed Gertrude, sitting down by the side of Alice, who was resting on a knoll of grass, "that would be worse than all, for then your thoughts would walk on too, and leave me more than ever *de trop*."

Alice looked up with a blush, and laughing at her cousin, she hastily arose, urging on her companions no further loss of time; "For see," she said, "the

sun is getting high, and we have a long walk before we reach the Waterfall."

"I suppose, then," remarked Algernon, "that we are to tiffin upon blackberries, for we cannot get back to Earlswood in time for luncheon."

"Papa will join us at the farm," replied Alice, "and there we shall have an early dinner; and then walk home through Glencombe to see the church, which is quite finished. The organ was put up in the gallery this morning."


The party now walked on with light and happy hearts; enjoying the enchantment of earth and air, as then lighted up by a resplendent day; and, as earth and air can only be thoroughly enjoyed where nature holds her sovereign rule, apart from the busy world, refined, and refining all around her by her own pure atmosphere. For, who has not felt the influence of her outward types within the soul's deep life, where every thought must expand for good or evil? Who has not felt the silent eloquence of lessons, engraven on every leaf of the forest, on every stone of the earth, in illustration of those spiritual realities which are the substance of their mystic signs; thus embodied to lead us from natural philosophy to revealed religion,—from the book of nature to the "Book of Life;" from light in creation to light in redemption?

The Waterfall at length was reached, and the tired

party glad to rest after the toils of a ramble which had led them from "tow'ring cliffs" to the deep ravine, and again from the valley to the mountain top ; sometimes through steep and narrow paths, arrested here and there by network of tangled brushwood, through which they had to force their way ; or, sometimes over fragments of broken rock, among which the rapid waters, escaping from the mimic cataract above, danced down in eddies swift and clear, as if in mockery of the slow and timid steps that scarcely dared to tread from one stone to another, lest the weight of even a fairy foot might overbalance the treacherous support, and leave the luckless intruder ankle deep in water. At one time, Alice was entrapped within the mazes of a thorn bush, from which the patient efforts of Ernest could scarcely extricate the delicate folds of her dress. At another, a cry from Gertrude announced her total discomfiture, down the dry and rolling sands of a broken bank, which Algernon, compassing by a leap, saved her from further downfall. Then came the ringing, joyous laugh of happy girlhood, which so rarely overflows the heart in after years.

And now the bed of the Waterfall was reached, whence, the waters rushing madly down, dashed against the impeding rocks, into a thousand sprays of silver foam, and, wreathing into feathery mists, sparkled like jewels in the sunny air, as if each drop

encased a gem within its tiny globe. The table land, to which the party had ascended, was richly covered with grass and wild flowers, still retaining the verdant freshness of summer, fed by the continual moisture of the light sprays which gently watered them, and shaded by the mountain ash, with its pendant berries of red ; the copper beech and silver birch, grouped together in beautiful contrast, adding greatly to the picturesque effect of one of the most splendid views which the neighbourhood afforded. Here, the tired party sat down to rest, beneath the shelter of the wood, and to enjoy the scenery around them, which might have looked like an exquisite painting, rich in foreground, and delicate in the purple mists of its perspective, had it not been that life was there to give animation to the whole. The songs of a thousand birds thrilled in sweet melody through the clear and quiet air, mingling with the low sighs of the foliage, as now and then the breeze passed over, scattering from the clustered trees, showers of withered leaves, to the bosom of their parent earth. The plaintive bleating of the distant sheep, answering to the tinkling of their leader's bell ; the lowing of cattle ; the merry whistling of the ploughboy, following his reluctant team with patient steps, while toiling up and down the hills of fallow ground, all harmonizing in living music, and in natural portraiture, such as art can never truly imitate. In-



spired by sounds and sights, which thus "called to the cession of sweet silent thought," memories of the past, or dreams of a bright futurity, the wearied friends sat for awhile in listless enjoyment of their luxurious repose, until, roused from their reveries again, they talked of hopes, and promises, and achievements to come, as if evil could never blight the fair world of their fancy. Algernon was first recalled to the more stern realities of the present, by the unwelcome remembrance of Eton, to whose scholastic fosterage he was, in a few days, to be again consigned. "Oh, Eton!" he exclaimed, "thou tyrant keeper of my young liberty, for whom I must leave this fair paradise, and the dear companions of my happy scrambles; I cannot welcome thee to my heart's memory!"

Down went all the *Chateaux d'Espagnes*, which had floated so gracefully in the airy element of imagination, as if each heart, touched by electricity, vibrated to the shock, and awoke from its trance of hope's "young dream."

"Eton!" exclaimed Ernest, with a sigh; "now shame of you, Algy, to call forth that phantom to herald the spirits of other sad associations! There, by its side, looms the towers of Oxford in the dark perspective, and the word 'farewell' rises like an iceberg, freezing all it approaches."

"And there, too," said Lady Gertrude, sadly,

“comes the shadowy outline of Florence in its calm beauty, with its glowing skies, and fragrant flowers. Oh, Italy! thou land of sun and song, wherefore dost thou come?—yet, why should I bid thee stand away?”

“Algy, my dear ill-omened bird,” exclaimed Alice, reproachfully, “see what you have done by drawing the veil aside, which hung between the present happy hour and the fast coming time of painful separations.”

“Nay, Alice,” replied her brother, “we shall but part to meet again, I hope—sorrow giving place to joy; and joy be all the merrier for the sorrow which sent her back to us. I say not with Gertrude, ‘Italy stand away;’ for my spectre comes but to call me for awhile, that Eton, when my tasks within her classic walls be done, may send me back again to the welcome of my delightful home! You must be a schoolboy, Alice, to know the intensity of joy which did I never leave you, could never be experienced; a joy I would not barter for all the ease an idle life could give me; a joy which, I do believe, can never be surpassed even by the higher pleasures of man’s nobler aim and destiny.”

“And pray, Mr. Philosopher,” asked Ernest “what say you to the hour when Eton opens wide her maternal arms, not to *release*, but to fast bind, her returning truant within, what you poetically call


her classic walls, far away from scenes, and sisters such as these?"

"Why, I say," replied Algernon, "that it is an hour not to be compared in its painfulness to the unmixed joy which her release bestows. We go forth on a pathway of honourable competition, and we feel the value of the prize for which we are there to run; although we leave so much behind, which, for a little while, makes the race a weary one. But to come *home* again—oh, there's nothing like it in the whole history of man's life! It is unmixed in its anticipations; unmixed in its reality. I seem, at this moment, to hear the din of a hundred voices, resounding their echoes to the name of *home*, even for days before the signal of dispersion is given; and these echoes, are echoed back again in the scuffling for boxes and books, the upsetting of forms, the down-tumblings of inkstands. Home, is in every sound of the day's turmoil; in every dream of the night's short hours; *short*, for the first streak of morning's light wakes us up to show us the sun of our home; and every breath of its freshened air seems tuned to the music of 'Home, sweet home.' Ernest, I pity you, that you have never been to school!"

All laughed heartily at the boy's earnest enthusiasm. It had again changed the current of their thoughts, from fast gathering memories of painful associations, to the brighter ones of youthful dreams.

Alice looked proudly on her manly brother. She started up, and pressing her lips fondly to his open brow, sweet thoughts of her mother mingled with the sister's love, and she turned hastily away to suppress the tears which she felt fast rising to her eyes. Again they all walked on, and soon reached Ashley Farm, where stood an old-fashioned substantial house, with its quaint porch of oak, covered with the American creeper, and to this they took their way, through a garden where the rich blossoms of the bright-coloured dahlias, and stately hollyhocks, had succeeded the more delicate lily and sweet-scented jasmine, now "faded and gone" with the "last rose of summer."

This was the trysting place where Mr. Everard already awaited his children, and their companions, who were now, also welcomed, with that warm and generous hospitality so peculiarly a characteristic of the Devonshire farmer. The fat and rosy wife, apprised of their coming, had prepared the best of her homely fare for her honoured guests, and the greeting on both sides was unaffectedly cordial and sincere. Soon the visitors sat down, hungry as hunters, to enjoy their dinner of poached eggs and bacon, home-brewed ale, and home-made bread; followed by a huge apple-pie, with custards and currant wine, which the younger party consumed with goodly zest, while recounting to Mr. Everard their



adventures of the morning, and, as Algernon declared, by no means in homœopathic portions. Neither were they suffered to go away empty-handed. The "gude wife" had filled a small basket with the best of her cream cheeses, and new-laid eggs, which was given into the special charge of "Master Algy," and after repeated thanks on one side, and "kindly welcomes" on the other, the guests again set forth on their return to Earlswood.

Mr. Everard, who, with his honest tenant, had inspected the different works going on about the farm, and listened with patient sympathy to his reluctant details of increasing difficulties which were beginning to lessen the resources of the agriculturist, said some whispered words in parting, which lighted up the bright face of the farmer with an expression of deep and earnest gratitude, the substance of which was a promise to lower the rent, to a degree of unexpected liberality, to meet the exigencies of the times. "The Lord requite you tenfold, sir," said the grateful man, "I shall now work on with a light heart, without reducing the wages of my poor labourers, for that was the sorest trouble of all. May the Lord bless you, and make me thankful for all His mercies!" Oh! what earthly boon can compare to a poor man's blessing! It falls upon the heart like the dew of the morning, if the motive of kindness be love to man, for the sake of God's love to ourselves.

The party now separated. Ernest and Algernon walked on together over fields which led them a shorter way to the village, that they might have the church opened in readiness for Mr. Everard and the girls, who followed more leisurely through the wood, and having reached the glen, they turned to the pathway which brought them at once to their destination, where the young men awaited them.

The church, which was of Norman architecture, stood on rising ground, apart from the clustered cottages of the village, sheltered at the rear by a screen of magnificent oaks, whose existence were probably coeval with the edifice itself; its square tower, covered with ivy, and the grey stone of which it was built, darkened by the rough winds of, at least, two hundred years. The original burying-ground had been more recently enclosed, and considerably enlarged, now forming a separate and modern cemetery, in which were groups of fine old forest trees, arching here and there, like bowers over the grassy mounds, or marble monuments of the dead; for here reposed the remains of many who had passed away from a by-gone and present generation. Rich and poor, young and old, good and evil, now lying side by side, no longer conscious of the distinctions which, even in a churchyard, mark the grades of human society. It was a scene calculated to awaken sad, but not unmingled associations; its

romantic locality, now greatly heightened by the sunset glow of an autumnal evening, softened by the mists which were beginning to veil the distant outline ; while gleams of lingering light fell, like golden threads, alike upon the sepulchres of the rich, and the lowlier graves covered by nature's velvet pall of green, or crested by choicest shrubs and flowers, the sweet offerings of hearts which could afford no costlier memento of undying love ! The deep stillness of this lonely cemetery, tenanted by so many "sleepers of the grave," seemed strangely to contrast with living groups of playful children, scattered about the village green below, whose voices, rising merrily with the air, mingling with the warbling of birds, answering to each other's evening song. The interior of the church had been recently repaired and greatly improved. The old-fashioned, high, and heavy pews had been removed for those of modern construction, and made of oak, cut from trees grown on the Earlswood estate. A gallery had also been erected for the schools ; a small, but fine-toned organ, forming the centre, given unitedly by Alice Everard and her brother ; and little Catherine, selected as her own especial offering, the new Bible and Prayer Book for the reading-desk. The chancel was perfectly plain and unadorned, save by the beautiful stained glass window of mediæval date, which had been cleaned, but otherwise left untouched. It re-

presented no figures, but was rather a brilliant yet subdued combination of gem-like mosaic, of that deep colouring which has never been equalled by modern artists. The whole was in perfect keeping and good taste ; the fittings throughout were handsome, and the furniture of the communion-table, made of strong Genoa velvet, as the most lasting material, was plain, without any elaborate or fanciful decoration to arrest the eye, or to mar the unchangeable character of a church, that of a place set apart for the solemn but simple purpose of prayer and praise—consecrated to the worship of God, and for the assembling of His true believers, that there they might “draw near in faith,” to glorify Him, and to supplicate for pardon, in “spirit and in truth,” because, “the Father seeketh such” alone, “to worship” and to serve Him.

Underneath the chancel had formerly been the family vault of the Sydneys ; but, previously to the death of the late Sir Lennard, it had been removed, with all it contained, to a mausoleum erected in the cemetery ; Mr. Everard, so highly disapproving of that strange custom, of desecrating the house of God, by making it a charnelhouse for the dead, and a shrine for the trophies of human pride.

The good rector and his young companions, now stood looking on the work thus completed ; he with feelings of pleased and grateful reverence ; they, less

reflective, expressing their varied opinions on the effect produced by recent alterations ; all but Lady Gertrude assenting to an unqualified approbation. *She* thought the chancel far too plain ; Alice, who for a time was to be the organist, naturally manifested peculiar delight in her new instrument, on which she had long excelled ; she now cheerfully complied with her father's wish, that she should go and play his favourite voluntary, introducing Mozart's beautiful "Agnus Dei." While listening with a rapt mind, to sounds powerfully recalling the music of other days, Mr. Everard leant thoughtfully against the chancel rails, his heart full of reminiscences which so fondly, and yet so sadly, awakened the remembrance of his lost Alice, as she once stood there by his side, in all her maiden beauty, when with woman's trustful love, she had on that very spot vowed to be his own through good and evil. Her voice seemed, once more, to rise with the deep notes of the organ, mingling with its holy music, as she had so often done beneath the sacred roof. But, when the symphony softly died away in cadence which floated like incense through the silent air, he experienced the full measure of his bitter bereavement ; for the sweet vision of her presence ceased with the last chord of that hallowed strain ; he *felt* the reality of her death, but he knew she was in heaven. Beside him, stood Ernest Willoughby,

listening with a mind as rapt and thoughts as abstracted as his own, but widely different were the visions of his young imagination. Mr. Everard had called up the past, but the sorrowful present mocked its dreams of earthly happiness. Ernest had wandered into realms of the future, where life was full of hope,—a hope which had no past to cancel the illusion of her promises. The Lady Gertrude had sat down on the nearest seat, and *her* thoughts, too, were wafted far away, while resting her head upon her hand, a foreshadowing of sorrow seemed to blend with her brighter fancies; but she was naturally of a superstitious temperament, and loved to indulge in those dangerous reveries of unreal, and mystic phantasies, that too often enchain the youthful intellect, exhausting its best powers in useless theories, or profitless romance. So now, some note had touched a chord within the heart of Gertrude, which the magic of her morbid fancy, had wrought into hopes and fears, so vague and undefined that, without knowing why, her tears fell fast from her eyes, and she wished that God were more in all her thoughts.

Thus were the listeners found, when Alice and her brother (who had gone with her to the organ-loft) returned. The father drew his daughter to his side, and, fondly blessing her, breathed an inward prayer, that while she ministered within the visible Church, she might grow up as a polished corner of

that holier one, "not made with hands," the invisible Church of the "sanctified in Christ Jesus," of which He alone is the "Great High Priest."

Algernon looked earnestly at his father, for he saw an unwonted tear steal down his honoured cheek, and the affectionate boy, aware that some deep feeling connected with his mother's memory had called it there, laid his hand upon his arm, and making excuse to draw him away, endeavoured to interest his mind with some village casualty, and thus changed the current of his painful thoughts, while both together left the church, and walked away to the glen. Lady Gertrude had regained her self-possession, but still remained thoughtful and absorbed, while Alice and Ernest, standing hand in hand, where Mr. Everard had left them, felt the influence of that quiet, holy place, and breathed for each other and themselves, a heart-felt, but unuttered prayer. At length Ernest looked up, and said, "Oh, Alice! when shall we here consecrate our vows to love faithfully, and for ever, through the world's vicissitudes of joy and sorrow?"

"I think," replied Alice, smiling in her calm serenity, "that we have already promised that; we have greater need, perhaps, to pray that we may never turn our love into idolatry, or ever wish our promise cancelled."

"Cancelled!" exclaimed Ernest, reproachfully, "do you then *doubt* me, dearest Alice?"

"No, Ernest," she replied, solemnly, "I do not for a moment doubt you, and can scarcely define the thought which, for a moment, took the shape of an apprehension; but it fell like a shadow upon my heart, and almost involuntarily I gave it utterance; but I wish my words unspoken, if they gave you pain."

"Come, Alice," impatiently exclaimed Lady Gertrude, suddenly starting from her seat, and affectionately putting her arm round her cousin, "do let us go home, for the sun has set, and this twilight, blending with the stillness of all around, makes us feel melancholy."

"I hope," said Ernest, smiling, "that you do not include *me* in your pronoun plural, for I never felt less melancholy in my life. My thoughts have all been, '*en couleur de rose*,' while Alice, and her sweet holy music, as it rolled through this consecrated place, harmonized together in my heart, and seemed to embody all that hope could promise, both for earth and heaven."

"And yet," said Alice, "I too, think that there is something inexpressibly solemn, in the feeling awakened by a sense of Jehovah's peculiar presence, within a temple consecrated to His worship; a feeling tenfold more impressive—though I know not why—when thus it stands in twilight silence, with scarce a tread heard to fall on its paved floor, than

when the voices of an assembled congregation fill the air with human praise. It is, perhaps, the very solemnity of such impressions, which is not unallied to, what Gertrude calls, *melancholy*; so impossible is it, I think, to separate the contemplation of God's great goodness in hearing prayer, and man's strange reluctance to offer prayer, or to separate all that Christ, in his unspeakable love, has done and suffered for us, from our own individual sinfulness, which formed a part of His ignominious and suffering death—a death, which in our daily life, we mourn so coldly, think of, if at all, so lightly! And who that has a spark of gratitude for the blessings of grace, and means of grace, all flowing from the fountain of Emmanuel's blood, can kneel here without shame and sorrow that we dishonour them so often, when we go forth and barter the very blessing we have asked, for the vain and passing shadows of the world."

"True, dear Alice," said Ernest, fervently, "but happy are they, who do feel this shame and sorrow, if they drive us to the 'well-spring of life' in Christ, that our sorrow may be turned into joy, our shame to praise. Oh! that it were always our pride to say, 'I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of the wicked.' But now to our home, dear one, for the sun's last gleam is gone, and your father will wonder why we

stay so long. We have had a happy, very happy day, when shall we three meet again for such another?"

They were now turning away, but Alice, hesitating, took Lady Gertrude's hand between both her own, and said with much emphasis, "Gertrude, my more than sister, and you, dear Ernest, will, indeed, both soon be far away, and it may be long, long before we all meet again together in this holy place. Let us kneel down and pray that God may bless us, and that the Lord may 'watch betwixt us, when we are absent one from another.'" And they did kneel down on the chancel steps, and bowed their heads upon the chancel rail, but we know not what they asked; their prayer went up as incense into heaven, and peace was its answer. So they arose with grateful hearts, and went on their homeward way rejoicing.

CHAPTER IV.

" Oh ! how unlike the complex work of man,
Heav'n's easy, artless, unencumbered plan.
No meretricious graces to beguile,
No clustering ornaments to clog the pile ;
From ostentation, as from weakness free,
It stands like the cerulean arch we see,
Majestic in its own simplicity.
Inscribed above the portal from afar,
Conspicuous as the brightness of a star ;
Legible only by the light they give,
Stand the soul quick'ning words—BELIEVE AND LIVE !"

IN an oriel window of the breakfast-room of Earlswood sat the Lady Gertrude Austyn, arranging flowers in a porcelain vase, while her cousin Alice was copying music at another table, on the morning after their walk to the Waterfall, detailed in our last chapter. Some remark from Lady Gertrude suddenly arrested Alice in her work, who, turning round, exclaimed; " Surely, Gertrude, you cannot

mean that flowers, and candles, and costly crosses, can really add sanctity to Christian worship, or that all such 'beggarly elements' can possibly tend either to our own devotion, or to the glory of God?"

"I think," replied Lady Gertrude, "that His own word bears evidence that they have done so. Did not Jehovah Himself command the most costly offerings for the temple of the Israelites, 'of gold, and silver, and precious stones;' and 'an altar on which to burn incense?' And did He not even design the pattern of its furniture to the minutest borderings? commanding Moses to make 'holy garments for Aaron his brother,' the officiating high priest, for 'glory and for beauty,'—of fine twined linen, with gold, and purple, and scarlet? Would God have condescended to such details, as acceptable to Him, had they been, as you call them, 'beggarly elements?'"

"Whatsoever God commands," replied Alice, reverently, "must be of high import, and for great results; but it is almost impious, dear Gertrude, to draw a parallel between that tabernacle and the churches of our day; or to justify the senseless ceremonies and dresses of the Romish priesthood on the ground of such a parallel. You, who have heard such a beautiful commentary on all these holy types, in lectures from the lips of my dear father, cannot be ignorant of the history they embody."

"Still," replied Gertrude, "I see not why we should not shadow forth our own heart's love to God in typical emblems, which He despiseth not, as the offerings of his own peculiar people ; and, I repeat, that the chancel of a church, really typifying the tabernacle, or 'Holy of holies,' as being set apart for the eucharistic sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, should be separate from the congregation, nor can it contain too costly an altar, considering for what that altar is designed."

"All which is idolatrous," said Alice, warmly, "and contrary to everything our Saviour taught by example or precept. The types or shadows of the Mosaic dispensations have long since passed away before the glorious light of the 'Sun of righteousness,' their holy prototype,—a light which we have no right to darken by man's *unbidden* inventions. The mysterious veil of the temple has been 'rent in twain ;' not one stone of the temple itself is left upon another, and all its beautiful handicraft destroyed for ever ; for the purposes of Jehovah concerning them have been accomplished, and their intent fulfilled, for Christ Himself is become the living temple, embodying in His own person the 'Lamb slain' as the 'perfect oblation, once offered for the sins of the world ;' and when He said, 'It is finished,' the types ordained to foreshadow *Himself*,—His office and His sacrifice,—at that moment passed away for

ever! The hour was come when the true worshipers should worship the Father, *not through types and ceremonies*, but in 'spirit and in truth.' Our communion table is no '*altar*,' for there is 'no more sacrifice for sin.' The body, broken for our sakes, can be broken no more; and 'the blood,' poured out for our atonement, can be shed no more. So, when the Lord instituted the sacrament at the passover supper, He gave His disciples bread and wine, to be as continual *memorials* of Himself, but never as portions of His flesh and blood; for, at that time, He had not yet suffered the death thus to be memorialized. He spake then, as He was often wont to do, in the figurative language of the East, and you might as well argue that Christ was literally 'a door,' because He called Himself so; or literally 'the rock' of the wilderness, because St. Paul said, 'that rock was Christ,' as to say the sacramental bread is literally His body, or the wine literally His blood."

"Neither do I say this," replied Gertrude, "for I am no Roman Catholic; nevertheless, I believe with Mr. Grey, that the Eucharist is something more than bread and wine *after* its consecration, a mysterious sacrifice offered for us on the altars of our Church. But leaving all such questions as beyond our comprehension, why should you object to *beautify* the house of God even with gold and pre-

cious stones, yet spare neither expense nor trouble to decorate your drawing-room? Why may I fill this vase with choicest flowers to ornament this oriel window, and yet be called idolatrous if I take it as an offering to my Father's house?"

"Because," answered Alice, "such decorations are to gratify the human senses; our very drawing-rooms often illustrating the 'pride of life,' and the 'lust of the eye.' These things are of the world, and we use them for worldly purposes; but it is almost impious to suppose that they can add sanctity to our worship of God; or be pleasing in His sight, who, through His holy word, has commanded even *us*, creatures of sense, not to set value on the 'things of the world;' shall we then insult Him by supposing for a moment that they can be valued by *Himself*? Let us not mock Him by our works of supererogation, which too often supersede the Divine claims; but let us render to Him the obedience His commands require. Then talk no more of gems and golden crosses, as fitting oblations for the temple of the Most High!"

Lady Gertrude reddened, for she felt that Alice spoke more truly, perhaps, than she was willing to admit; but soon returning to the subject at issue, she said, pettishly, "Then, in fact, you think it signifies little, how mean or dilapidated a church is left, since it need be no more than a shed and shelter for

those who go to 'worship in spirit' under its cob-web roof. The cliff church must be a perfect model in your eyes."

Alice looked up, and laughed at the absurdity of her cousin's perverse commentary on her real meaning. "Is there no difference," she asked, "between neglect and senseless decoration? between dust and dilapidation and religious order? I grant it is a great scandal to see a place of worship like that of the cliff, not only out of repair, but positively dirty. A church, as set apart for sacred purposes, cannot be too sacredly preserved; of beautiful exterior, if you will, while the interior should combine all that is useful, and well adapted to its holy purpose; but this does not trench upon the principle that simplicity and not costliness, should be its character; avoiding all those gaudy decorations and misplaced ornaments which can only serve to divert the mind of the worshipper from the real object of his worship. And as to offerings, let us take those which the Lord Himself has asked us to give Him—the loving, grateful *heart*; the contrite spirit; the lowly mind; the guileless tongue; a living faith and a holy life. These are the offerings most acceptable to God, and He will estimate them far above all else that we could offer, for they are the workmanship of His own Holy Spirit, 'first-fruits to God and the Lamb.' No, Gertrude, we cannot propitiate

Jehovah by any self-constituted ordinances or impositions; nor serve God but by obedience to the word of God."

"And yet," said Gertrude, "as by outward fruits our inward faith is testified, so I do believe that by outward things, our inward faith may be strengthened. We are, indeed, all creatures of sense, and I have myself experienced the influence of beautiful objects and exquisite music, when kneeling before the shrine of a Madonna and her holy child, in the cathedrals abroad, and yet I am no worshipper of the Virgin Mary."


"All nothing more than the 'loveliness of the song,'" said Alice, "which passes away with the 'pleasant voice' which sings it; leaving no practical fruits behind. Depend upon it, dear Gertrude, that a pure and pious heart needs no such excitements to holiness of life or worship. They but act upon a morbid imagination, not upon the earnest soul soaring far above these sublunary things to hold communion with our Father in heaven; and when we kneel before His unseen throne of grace, whether in a church or in the solitude of our own closets, the less our bodily senses are engaged, the more likely are we spiritually to discern the sins of our soul, and the presence of Him before whom we plead for their remission. For this reason, my dear father objects to much artistic decoration in a place

of worship, although by no means indifferent, as I think he has just proved, to what is due to its character and its sacredness. And another reason is the expenditure it involves, too often at the sacrifice of nobler objects—nobler, for the wants of the widow and the fatherless, the sick and the destitute, the heathen and the outcasts, are infinitely more precious in the sight of God than the costly and elaborate ornaments you would lavish upon that, which can neither honour Him, nor profit mankind.”

“Oh, Alice!” exclaimed Gertrude, “how sadly can prejudice blind the judgment, even in spite of the most holy example. Our Lord himself reproved the disciple who urged that Mary of Bethany should have sold her precious ointment for the poor, accepting it as a ‘good work,’ wrought upon His blessed person, which the apostolic Church may be said to represent; and yet you would deem this a needless waste, because Christ *required* no such costly offering.”

“And is there, then, no difference,” asked Alice, “between the inanimate workmanship of man’s hands; between a temple of wood and stone—holy as it may be—and the living temple of Christ’s body? ‘Holiest of holies!’ Had Mary’s offering been a thousandfold more costly, it would have been less waste to pour its soothing and refreshing balm on the anguished, toil-worn, sacred

person of the Redeemer, when, as a 'man of sorrows,' He was about to drain to its very dregs that bitter cup of propitiation, well nigh too bitter for even *His* endurance. Mary of Bethany had sat at His feet, and doubtless learnt of Him what death it behoved Him to die ; and although He stood revealed to her as the 'Lord of Life,' and, therefore, His death must have been a great mystery to her, yet she said not, with unbelieving Peter, 'This shall not be unto Thee ;' but rather, in silence and sorrow, she prepared the fragrant oil, and anointed the Holy One against the day of His burial. But is it possible that *this* act of love and faith can, for a moment, be brought forward by your new teachers as a sanction to costly adornments upon a house made with mortal hands ? And how inconsistent is it, in some cases, with the principle of common honesty which it involves ; for you yourself, when detailing the extraordinary beauty of a new church which you had seen, so gorgeous in its interior magnificence, regretted that the rector who designed it, and on whose responsibility it was so adorned, had involved himself in so large an amount of debt, that it would be his utter ruin, if not cancelled by public liberality. Now, Gertrude, tell me honestly, do you think that God could be honoured by *this* display, made at the sacrifice of one of His express commands, 'Owe no man anything ?' Could



it weigh for a moment against an act of disobedience in His pure mind, whose test of man's disobedience is, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments?' The Holy Spirit warns us not 'to do evil that good may come,' nor do the Scriptures anywhere warrant the dangerous and delusive doctrine that a holy end—even if it be a holy one—sanctifies the use of unholy means!"

"It is for the Church to judge of means," retorted Gertrude, who dared not either acknowledge herself conquered, or deny those inward convictions which almost forced themselves upon her conscience even in spite of herself. "Her mysteries are not to be lightly canvassed, or disputed, because they lie far beyond the depth of private judgment. But, I believe, you are fast retrograding into dissent. It is a dangerous thing, Alice, to be a rationalist."

"*Rationalist!* dear Gertrude, what strange notions and names you have taken up! You might as well call me infidel at once, which, I fancy, would define your meaning of a synonymous principle."

"Oh, no!" replied Gertrude, quietly, "I am far from accusing you of infidelity, although it may be that an indiscriminate use of private judgment in the holy Scriptures lead, more or less, to such an end."

"Do you really mean to infer then," asked Alice, "that private judgment and Rationalism are one and the same thing?"

“Not exactly, perhaps,” replied Gertrude, hesitatingly; “but the one is the groundwork of the other. If we reason upon things above the comprehension of uninspired minds, we make a religion of our own, and fall into endless heresies, every man becoming his own teacher.”

“All which is, certainly the very essence of infidelity,” replied Alice, warmly. “Rationalism, if I understand the expression, is nothing more nor less than perverting the great boon of intellect, by attempting to make the finite equal, instead of subservient, to the infinite; reasoning upon the hidden mysteries of God, which He has wisely left unrevealed; and questioning decrees, either in the laws of nature or in the dispensations of grace, which can be compassed only by an Almighty power. *This* is reason making a religion of its own depraved will, independent of, and often in defiance of Divine revelation. But what *you* call private judgment, I presume, is no more than meekly exercising the intellect with which God has so wonderfully endowed us, as the link betwixt the Creator and the created soul, for the express purpose of learning that which He has revealed to us for our instruction. ‘Come, let us reason together,’ is the very language of the Holy One to every earnest disciple who will, indeed, seek to learn of Him the way of salvation and everlasting life.”

"But surely, Alice," retorted Gertrude, "you will allow that as God appointed prophets and apostles to instruct the infant Church in His word and will, so should we meekly learn through the successors of those apostles in this our day, and not through our own interpretation of things 'hard to be understood,' even by the most learned and devout."

"Truths," said Alice, "which have been revealed to 'babes and sucklings,' though often 'hidden from the wise and prudent;' because the child-like learner goes to Christ to seek the knowledge of Christ, while the wise of this world seek wisdom from man's vain traditions, and, in their pride of human agency, exalt those uninspired records beyond the holy Scriptures."

"Nay," interrupted Gertrude, "it is you, and those of your school, who are proud of human agency, when you suppose yourselves competent to interpret the 'deep things of God,' through your own unassisted powers."

"Did I say," exclaimed Alice, "that any human being of my school, as you call it, or any other school, could learn truth through their own unassisted powers? No, Gertrude; but where, let me ask, shall we go for the teaching of prophets and apostles, if not direct to the Bible itself, which they were inspired of the Holy Ghost to dictate for our

guidance in all spiritual things? And when my Saviour bids me 'search the Scriptures,' as testifying of Himself, and tells me they are 'able to make me wise unto salvation,' why should I leave these holy records of His revealed will, and ask of any man to point out for me, *apart from these*, a rule of faith, and a code of practical religion?"

"Because," replied Gertrude, "the Lord Himself ordained a Church to teach you, vesting in her bishops and pastors the sole right of interpreting apostolic doctrines; and after all, Alice, where was your own faith learnt, if not through the teaching of the Church, in the person of your father, one of her appointed and consecrated ministers? You were taken to her bosom in holy baptism, sealed to the Church in her sacraments, and your very faith founded on her creeds."

"I grant all this," said Alice, "but neither the Church, as you call it, nor its ministers, nor its baptisms, nor its creeds, could make me spiritually a 'child of God,' without a greater work than is vested in the ministers of any Church on earth. They are, indeed, all precious, very precious means of grace, but not grace itself. They are streams flowing from the fountain of 'living waters,' but not the fountain itself. My dear father trained me in the faith of the Church, but he never professed to give me the faith which is 'in Jesus.' He bap-

tized me with water, thus dedicating me, through the 'sign of regeneration,' to the service of God, and to discipleship with Christ; but he has ever led me to seek by prayer the one and only sanctifying baptism of the Holy Ghost. He taught me the creeds of the Church; but he led me to search the holy Scriptures for the doctrines they condensed, and by these alone to value and to test them. My father, indeed, has taught me well, as an 'ambassador for Christ,' and servant of God; but he ever led me from himself, and from all human ministrations, and human instructions, to the ministrations of the Holy Spirit, and to the teaching of Him who 'spake as never man spake,'—for my new born life in Christ on earth, and for my redeemed life with Christ in heaven."

"And to all these," replied Gertrude, "the Church would lead you through safer channels than your own judgment in the mysteries of holy Scripture. It is the helm which guides the bark—her priesthood the pilots who steer us through the rocks, and without whose aid the soul is left to strike against schism on the one side, and on infidelity on the other. Dearly as I love my uncle, and reverence his beautiful character, I, nevertheless, think he errs in *some* of his views; that is," she added, hesitatingly, "he is a little too much of the Low Church school."

“*Low Church* school!” exclaimed Alice, indignantly, “my own dear father *Low Church*! He whose whole life has been one consistent, earnest aim and desire, to attain meetness for that great high Church which is ‘eternal in the heavens,’ not made with hands! The sole object of my father’s worship is the Triune Jehovah, whose dwelling is above all heavens. His faith, founded on the word of God, is the evidence of things unseen within the veil of heaven. His hope is anchored on that ‘Rock of ages,’ whose foundation is in the eternity of heaven. The best and deepest of his heart’s affections is ‘love to Christ,’ who is ascended into heaven. His walk is heavenward; his works are heavenward; his teaching is heavenward; and in all these things the Holy Spirit from heaven is *his* teacher and his guide. And when he offers the sacrifice of his heart’s surrender in prayer and thanksgiving, through the ‘angel of the covenant,’ Jesus Christ, our great and only High Priest, he kneels before the ‘golden altar’ in heaven, which is before the throne within the ‘heaven of heavens.’ If *this* be *Low Church*, then, indeed, terms are reversed in the dictionary of your new philosophy, and our language is become as an unknown tongue.”

“The veriest Dissenter might say all this,” replied Gertrude, “in defence of his dissent, and overthrow the Anglican Church altogether, while you,

Alice, would leave only its foundation, amid the mass of its own ruins. This is what I call Low Church, as bringing her down almost to the ground, among you all."

"I would not remove from our precious Anglican Church, one stone which stands on the foundation of God's word," exclaimed Alice, warmly. "A national church is assuredly according to the revealed economy of Divine laws, and when we bear in mind, from what a mass of superstition and idolatrous errors, our blessed Reformers cleansed them, it is only wonderful to find so little of the dross mingling with the purer ore. Nevertheless, the Reformers were but fallible men, and their work was, of course, far from perfect; although compared with other forms and religious establishments, we may well appreciate our own, as, perhaps, the purest Christian Church since the time of the apostles and their immediate successors; and I trust," added Alice, smiling, "a time may come when every morsel of remaining Popery shall be cast forth with the rubbish which the Reformers threw away."

"And I," retorted Gertrude, "hope the *gems* will be restored which they so ruthlessly destroyed. I am sure *they* were Low Church."

"No, Gertrude," exclaimed Alice, "it is they are Low Church, who would unite the service of God and the world, in very opposition to the declared word of

the Spirit, that the two cannot so blend ; and who, religiously adhering to their own Church, its services, its rituals, its appointed feasts and fasts, deem these the substance of the soul's religion. And while in that Church they reiterate, sabbath after sabbath, may be day after day, the solemn confessions of a contrite heart, the prayer that God may 'pitifully behold the sorrows of that heart,' and enable them henceforth to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, in 'a holy and religious life,' go forth from that Church to mingle again amid the pastimes and society of the world, to do their own pleasure, 'speak their own words,' little impressed with the language they have uttered, or by the vows they have renewed. It is *they* are '*Low Church*,' who go to the solemnities of Lent, and, may be, experience a passing sorrow for sins which required such a holy sacrifice to expiate and to absolve, who make resolutions, and weep over the touching history of Christ, in that awful week of His surpassing endurance and death, professing to feel, and perhaps they *do* feel, 'the burden of their sins intolerable ;' yet, after all this, they fly back to the world which they had promised to renounce, as if sin had never been, the Saviour had never suffered, and then, through the Easter week, revel amidst the frivolous, and often guilty pleasures of the theatres, and other pageantries of the world's inventions, thrown open with tenfold

profusion, as if to neutralise the penance of melancholy Lent. And yet many of these pride themselves upon being members of the *High Church*, while they look down with contempt, and ridicule, and reproach, upon the lowly in heart, the repentant in soul, and taunt them with the charge of rationalism and Low Church views! And why? Because, while gratefully estimating all that the Church of England bestows, as blessed means of grace, they rest not there, but seek a holier absolution than any visible Church can bestow, and, refusing to mingle in scenes where *God is not*, they strive after a deeper reformation of heart and life in silent but sincere efforts to 'keep the commandments,' to 'love not the world,' but rather to seek, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that 'strait gate and narrow way' of salvation, which '*few*' are said to find: for we all, naturally, follow the multitude of evil doers, who entice us to the 'broad road' of final destruction."

Lady Gertrude felt the truth of all this, and forbore reply. For a few minutes the young disputants were silent, until Alice, almost unconsciously speaking her thoughts, murmured, "My father! my dear, excellent father, *Low Church*!" Her cheek flushed, but she conquered her rising emotion, and turning to her cousin, she said more gently, "Oh, Gertrude! is it possible that the novel, and I must think the un-

scriptural, opinions of a young Oxford theologian, can have biassed your mind, against the lessons of one, whose faith is in the pure, unmutilated Scriptures of holy inspiration! Have you forgotten all that my father taught us through the earliest years of our infancy and childhood, when by 'line upon line, precept upon precept,' he led us like lambs to the fold of Jesus, that we might seek no other Shepherd, hear no other voice, pray in no other name? And when, side by side, we had thus learnt our day's lesson of holy truth, have you forgotten how fervently my father would pray that God might bless us for the Saviour's sake? And even now I seem to hear my sweet mother's deep 'Amen;' and feel her fond embrace as she raised us from our knees, and, pressing us both to her bosom, called us her 'precious twins.' Yet, Gertrude, you can now give heed to a stranger's voice, and, like a wandering sheep, would seek a path which leads, you know not where, and make saviours and intercessors of saints, who could not save themselves."

The voice of Alice faltered, and tears fell fast from her downcast eyes, as she turned away to hide them; but Lady Gertrude in a moment was by her side, and throwing her arm affectionately round her, she exclaimed, "Alice, my own dear Alice, forgive me. I have been wrong and foolish in speaking of my beloved uncle as I did. I see that I have pained and

vexed you ; but I did not mean it. Perhaps I am altogether wrong, for sometimes I know not what I do believe. Some tell me one thing, some another, 'till I am almost bewildered into no belief at all. Dearest, do not turn away so coldly ! Say that you forgive me, and love me, as we ought to love each other."

But Alice, disengaging herself from her cousin, answered, pettishly, that she had nothing to forgive, as Gertrude had an undoubted right to differ from herself, if she so pleased ; and then rising to put away her music, which had progressed but little, she strove to regain her self-command. It was now poor Gertrude's turn to feel pained by this unmerited repulse. She walked back to the window, and taking a flower from the vase, she plucked it to pieces, as if to crush its beauty and its life, as her own heart felt crushed by the petulance of Alice. At this moment the merry voice of young Everard was heard approaching, and soon he entered the room followed by Ernest Willoughby. Alice hastily passed them, as she returned to her room, while Lady Gertrude, with a flushed cheek, still tore away, leaf after leaf, from a sprig of myrtle, loaded with its delicate blossoms. "Why, Gertrude," exclaimed Algernon, laughing, as his quick eye caught the pained expression of her averted face, "what wild wind has ruffled the waves of your serene temper?"

"And with Alice, all was not a dead calm, I think," said Ernest, "when she flitted passed us, like a lark on the wing. Have you two been quarrelling?"

"We never quarrel," replied Gertrude, smiling, "we have only been arguing a little on the affairs of the Church, and the winds, as Algy calls them, set in adverse currents, and so worked up a storm."

"Well," exclaimed Algernon, "when returned member of Parliament for the county of Devon, I shall bring in a bill that girls shall never discuss matters of Church or politics, for I never knew a woman yet, who could argue on either, without losing both sense and temper."

"I think," remarked Ernest, "that when you write yourself M.P. you will have so many bills to bring in, that a long lifetime will hardly see them carried out again. But come, Lady Gertrude, and take a stroll round the lawn, in mercy to that vase of victimized flowers, which were not arranged so tastefully to die a violent death. I'll go, and call Alice down with a pebble."

"And break her window, at last," said Algernon, laughing, "which must be of adamant, I think, to stand all the pebbles thrown against it, like so many battering rams at a siege. I am sure, in mercy to those transparent panes, Alice had better live altogether down stairs."

Ernest Willoughby had bounded out of the open oriel, not staying to hear the end of this retort ; and Lady Gertrude was leaving the room, followed by Algernon, when they were arrested by the sound of wheels, rapidly advancing round the avenue. A carriage stopped : the hall-door was thrown open, and in an instant, Lady Gertrude rushed forward, and was soon fast locked in the arms of Lord Errisford, her loved, and loving father.

Church and State, and all else, were forgotten in the excitement of this happy meeting. The Earl, for some moments, saw nothing save his cherished child, but he was soon surrounded by every member of the Everard family, who warmly greeted his arrival, and he was not insensible to the affectionate welcome with which he was received. Not wholly, was his return unexpected, for he had announced his intention, personally to fetch away his lost child, as he had called her, in the course of that week ; but when a visit is thus undefined, it generally comes like a sudden surprise, at the most unlooked-for moment.

We will not, however, further detail the incidents of an eventful day, unsettled by a joyous interruption, and, consequently, desultory in its avocation ; we rather leave such digressions, and return to our heroines, who, at its close, were again alone, preparing for their hour of rest. They talked

earnestly together of the past, connected with the present, and of those separations now so near at hand. Nor had Alice forgotten how greatly she had, that morning, erred towards her cousin, in the petulant repulse of Gertrude's affectionate solicitude for restored peace, which terminated their painful discussion. And she had been wrong. But Alice was not perfect; her firmness of character, as we have before said, never gave way, where she believed herself right, even to the pleadings of her most deeply-rooted affections; but it was far from being an unshadowed merit, and where shall we find one in human nature? With her, it sometimes diverged into a spirit of intolerance, and she was slow in forgiving what appeared to her radically wrong, and yet whenever an angry temper betrayed itself, apart from the principle itself, as it had that morning done, her tender conscience bowed to self-reproach and unqualified confession, nor could she be happy until she had offered reparation to the aggrieved, so far as reparation for wrong is possible. So now, she had confessed her fault in earnest penitence to God, and it was expressed with affectionate sorrow to her cousin, who returned it with all the warmth of her generous nature, acknowledging, in her turn, how much more *she* had cause for self-reproach than Alice, good and consistent as she ever was. "Say no more, my sweet Alice," she added, "I would

rather, a thousand times, see you angry with me—and that is bad enough—than so angry with yourself; you who are always so gentle and forbearing in all *my* petulant tempers, and they, certainly, are not ‘few nor far between.’”

“Bless you, my generous Gertrude,” replied Alice, gratefully kissing her. “Oh! that we had not now to part.” Thus was peace restored. The cousins prayed together, and slept once more upon the same pillow, forgiven and forgiving, for the blessing of God was on them.

CHAPTER V.

“ Thus shall each unforgotten word,
When far those loved ones roam ;
Call back the hearts which once it stirred,
To childhood’s holy home.”

ON the arrival of Lord Errisford, Mr. Everard had hastened from his study, and was one of the first to welcome his noble brother-in-law. Warmly was the pressure of his hand returned, although the greeting was expressed more by the silent eloquence of words, for which, at first, the memories of both were too deep and full of pain. They were sincerely attached to each other, more, perhaps, through mutually interesting associations, than from any real union of principles ; for scarcely could two men be less alike in character ; and the dissimilarity had become more strikingly palpable, as years had proved them both in life’s experience. The one had always been a domestic and retired man, living in the

bosom of his family, and devoted to the work of his ministry, which formed the mainspring of all his pleasures and his duties. With him, too, the stream of existence had glided on, in one calm and even current, overshadowed by as few dark clouds of mental sorrow as could well pass over a mortal destiny. Brief had been life's sunshine with the other. The glowing dream of earthly happiness had passed away like a bright meteor—beautiful as evanescent; seen once, but never seen again. Scathed thus in heart, the mind of Lord Errisford, too manly for indolent grief, had turned to intellectual resources. He became wholly a statesman, devoting every energy of a highly cultivated understanding to the interests of his country; while he loved his sovereign too faithfully to be servile, and was too thoroughly unselfish to be ambitious. Such were they who now once more met together with feelings, at least, in unison, for both had warm and generous hearts. The Earl was grateful for all his brother had been to him in his affliction, and to his child in her infancy; while Mr. Everard was equally so, for the perfect confidence with which he had been so trusted, appreciating all that was morally excellent in the character of Lord Errisford, although he could not but wish, that he held the service of his earthly sovereign more wholly in subservience to the far higher claims of the “King of kings.” These differences of cha-

racter and pursuits were felt and understood by both; each one endeavouring to amalgamate the mind of the other to its own bias; but no unfriendly prejudice ever, for a moment, loosened the brotherly tie, which linked them so strongly together, through a chain of so many sacred reminiscences, in which both had loved, and both had suffered. They had not met since Mrs. Everard's death, and a common sorrow now seemed, yet more, to enhance the value of mutual sympathy. In their personal appearance there was, perhaps, a greater change than in character, since both were young. Time had dealt more gently with Mr. Everard, who now looked the junior, although a few years the reverse; his sweet, bright countenance altered only in being more subdued, by an expression of sorrow deepening his natural seriousness. But the smile remained the same, and on his cheek there was still the glow of perfect health. Lord Errisford was now pale and thin; his tall and graceful figure, more bent by languor than age, and his step was slow, as if the mainspring of his life had outworn its elasticity. His fine head was nearly bald, but the deep-set eye was still lighted by the energy of an undimmed intelligence; and his voice, modulated by a remarkably clear enunciation, fell strikingly, as ever, on the ear, rivetting attention to his remarks. His child was the one and only star of his heart's world, and

nothing was ever permitted to overshadow its radiance there. Nothing was spared or denied to make her happy ; yet never was care less judiciously bestowed to secure the desired aim. In her father's estimation, the Lady Gertrude was faultless, and her will, however wayward, was never thwarted, nor her judgment questioned; and had her natural disposition been less generous, or had not her early training happily laid the foundation of principles, which indulgence could never afterwards whole pervert, its result must have been fatal to the peace of both parent and child. Better still had it been, had Earlswood continued her home for a few years longer, that her young mind might have been matured in a "sound faith," and her religious principles called into exercise, before she embarked upon the ordeal of a destiny, so peculiarly trying to both. But the Earl had sacrificed much in parting from her, and he could see no cause for longer separation, when at fourteen, he found her all that his partial heart desired, blindly believing that in strength of character, she was matured beyond her years, whereas it was in this alone, perhaps, she was the reverse. Vain, therefore, were further remonstrances against her premature removal to a motherless home. He took her to Italy, where he was detained on a mission of some political importance, and having engaged as companion for his child, a widowed relative of his own,

who had suffered great reverses, and was now dependent upon his bounty, he believed that all had been done, necessary for the guardianship and comfort of his precious charge. He knew Mrs. Seymour to be a ladylike, well informed, well principled, and gentle being, and he inquired no further of her fitness to direct, or influence such a character, as that of Lady Gertrude. All this she truly was, but for the rest she was wholly unsuited.

It may appear inconsistent, if not improbable, that a man, wise as Lord Errisford was, in all matters calling forth such depth of intellect and strength of judgment, as he was known to exercise, should be so strangely the reverse, in those touching the highest charge committed to a parent's keeping. But human nature is a history of inconsistencies, and its annals furnish many such cases where, as the eye can sometimes gaze with an eagle's unflinching glance, upon the sun in its highest glory, and yet but dimly discern the nearer objects of earthly mould; so may the intellectual man, sometimes grasp with wondrous power, the highest limits of a great philosophy, and yet be singularly incomprehensive of the minor tactics of life, which most call for the exercise of common sense. Like the mariner, who, versed in that master science of navigation, seems to hold the ocean in his control, when through the dark and perilous waves of a fierce and raging sea,

every element at war above him, he calmly steers his bark unharmed to its distant port, and yet makes wreck while guiding it, in his blind self-reliance, through the less dangerous waters of a ruffled lake.

So it was with Lord Errisford, and thus the Lady Gertrude, when scarcely beyond her childhood, left the wholesome atmosphere of Earlswood, to be ostensibly the mistress of her father's palace at Florence, surrounded by everything calculated to attract and flatter human nature. At first, indeed, her young heart grieved sorely in parting from those who had been to her, as almost, more than parents, and separation from Alice, seemed a trial beyond her endurance; but the excitement of new prospects, and foreign scenery, with thoughts of home and all its independence, together with the society of a father whose indulgence knew no bounds, naturally blended too much of life's sunshine with her sorrow, to leave regrets long prominent in her feelings. Dangerous as was her position at Florence, its evils were often neutralized by the "sweet holy memories of other days," which, like ministering spirits, hovered round her, to breathe a silent warning, and wake her slumbering conscience to a remembrance of holier influences, and to the claims of a higher existence. In Mrs. Seymour, Lady Gertrude found a sweet-tempered and intelligent companion, but one who, as

her mind expanded with her fast advancing age, had no sympathy with the things of her "inner world." Perfectly free from enthusiasm herself, she never understood it in her young charge, so it was left, like a wild weed, to germinate among the blossoms of more sterling graces. She knew the Earl wished his daughter to be indulged, and therefore she never interfered with that indulgence; and although sometimes she would venture to give advice, which was generally at the time disputed, her utmost reply was, "Well, my darling, you must do as you like; but, I think, a time will come, when you will find yourself mistaken;" and then she would continue her embroidery or painting, in both which she excelled, without a ruffle upon her even temper, or a cloud over her calm smile. Her religious views coincided with those of the Earl, comprising very little beyond an adherence to the outward forms of our Church, both agreeing that in all else the soul should be left without any interference from man, as a matter exclusively betwixt that soul and its God. Thus, in one sense, it may be said, that both morally and spiritually, poor Gertrude had neither guidance nor control, save her own will; but it was not really so. That will seldom wandered into error, that it was not thwarted, and, perhaps, turned back, by the still small voice of that inner life which is *the life* of every child of God; a voice which only sin can

silence, when, at last, the soul departs from the "living God," to make self its idol, the world its "abiding place," and the "father of lies" its master! But Gertrude had been taught of the Spirit, and the love of God was in her heart, and had she always listened to its blessed admonitions, and followed Him who is "our help" in every time of weakness and of need, she had been spared many an after sorrow, the fruit of her own proud self-reliance, where most she was vulnerable to the delusive influence of "lofty imaginations."

After the novelty of her new home and position had subsided, Lady Gertrude became tired of unprofitable pleasures. The character is frequently moulded in early life, more by circumstance than by mere education, and thus was *her* mind advanced in many respects beyond her age, by being so peculiarly brought to act and think for herself, at a time when few are responsible in the same degree. She was often capricious from very weariness of having her own way uncontradicted, and then would she sigh for those blessed restraints under whose gentle rule she had been happier. She was not, indeed, without some congenial interests; but these were centred in those hallowed hours of sweet, confiding intercourse with her beloved father, when he could steal away from his onerous engagements, and throwing off the cares of diplomacy, devote himself to his

darling child, unshackled by the restraints of general society. Then would her intelligent mind expand to receive the rich and varied illustrations with which he would lead her through the lessons of his own deep researches, or amuse her by lighter themes of historic literature : all, with that engaging gentleness of manner and singular flow of eloquence, to which even his own child listened with rapt admiration. Evenings so passed, were to Lady Gertrude as refreshing springs to the travellers of the eastern desert; but they were "few and far between," so seldom could they meet alone; and among all that thronged her father's palace, she had found few, perhaps not one, companion really congenial to herself—not one who could mingle "thought with thought," in feelings and memories which lay hidden within her heart, apart from the surface of a refined, but shallow society. Young as she was, often did she rejoice, when the close of the day sent her to her lonely rest, from the courtly flattery of heartless admirers, and the exhausting excitements of worldly resources. And then would she sit down in the luxury of silent meditation, and beside her trellised window, fragrant with the perfume of its night blowing creepers, would gaze upon the "sweet moon," and wish she could read upon its beams of light, the thoughts and prayers breathed for her, at that moment, by those whose eyes might be rest-

ing, like her own, upon that same glorious orb. Oh! that she could "make its disk her ample page," and, by some mysterious agency, write all the yearnings of her soul, her wishes and her hopes, to Alice, the absent, far off sister of her heart's love. Then she would kneel down, and earthly shadows pass away, as holier realities arose with the prayer, deep, earnest, and sincere, that she might be pardoned and blest, and be still kept within the fold of her risen Lord. And who will say that her prayer, and her self-abasement, her acknowledgment of sin and weakness, and yearnings for holiness, transient though perhaps they proved, were not in answer to the strong pleadings with which the Everard family never ceased to supplicate for that "little one," whenever they together or apart asked mercies for themselves or others. The answer fell like "dew upon the tender grass," unseen, unknown by outward sound or sign; but the after fruits told of a growth that came from no earthly seed.

Such was the "mood of her spirit," when the Lady Gertrude (about a year previously to the death of Mrs. Everard) was introduced to an English family, known to her father when at Milan, and who now visiting Florence, soon became his frequent and intimate guests. The family consisted of a Baronet and his lady, a son and daughter, both nearly of the same age as Gertrude, and the son's tutor, a remark-

ably pleasing man, a graduate of Oxford, and a clergyman who had accepted the office under peculiar circumstances. His mind was of no common order, his principles were high, his character the most unblemished. His influence was great with both his pupils, young Mowbray and his sister, who regarded him as one set apart for "good works," and with a deference which at once told how highly he merited esteem. He was, for so young a man—scarcely beyond thirty years of age—unusually grave ; and sometimes a peculiar expression of sadness, mingled with his seriousness ; nevertheless, in conversation he was cheerful, and always instructive, for his pursuits were never trifling.

It was just at this period of our history, that the series of papers called "Tracts for the Times" were first issued from the Oxford press ; their subtle doctrines, beginning to steal like leaven through the lessons imparted to the students of the University. Wickliffe was no longer to be held up to them as the "morning star" of the Reformation, but rather denounced as the destroyer of the ancient faith. The voice of "tradition" was to be heard as paramount to the voice of Revelation ; and the holy Scriptures fall back into the shade, before the creeds of the Fathers. Faith was no more to look up through the telescope of God's promises, to be "the substance of things hoped for." She was now to look

down passive and blindfolded, and be led by bishops, and pastors, of apostolic succession only; hoping for nothing, but what "the Church," so-called, would authorize her to do. The soul was no longer to "come and reason," with the "Lord who bought her," that her "crimson sins" might be made "white as wool." She was now to reason no more at all, but, "when the sense of Scripture as interpreted by reason, was contrary to the sense given to it by Catholic antiquity," she was meekly "to side with the latter." * And as to the remission of her "crimson sins," she would find absolution only within the pale of "the Church," through the medium of bishops and priests. Even the Bible itself, was no longer to be our "Book of life," but rather as a "trumpet giving an uncertain sound;" and although hitherto taught by the Holy Spirit, that its essential truths are so plain, that "he who runs may read;" and that while hidden from the wise and prudent, "they have been revealed to babes and sucklings," as "a lamp to our feet, and a light unto our path," "*giving understanding to the simple*;" and notwithstanding, our blessed Redeemer himself declared, relative to His own teaching, that "if *any* man will do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine;" yet, in spite of all this sacred testimony to the simplicity of the Bible, the

* Newman, Lectures on Rom. page 160.

Oxford teachers have proclaimed, that "the gospel message is but *indirectly and covertly recorded* in Scripture, under the surface."* That, "God has given us doctrines, which are but obscurely gathered from Scripture; and a Scripture which is but *obscurely gathered from history*;"† and that we must have the "dogma, the Church's traditional, divinely inspired sense of the Bible, to make it really a revelation to us."‡ Yet, where is the obscurity in that glorious "gospel message," "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved?" or, in that, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous?" or, in any one of those "glad tidings," in which salvation rests? Well might the Lord declare of all who knew not His word, or knowing perverted it, "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" Baptism, too, was preached as "the primary instrument of justification,"§ the only channel of regeneration, although Jehovah declares in His holy word, that *faith* is the instrument of the one; and the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ, as "the power of God unto salvation," is the channel through which we receive the other; "being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the *word of God* which liveth and abideth for ever."

* Tract 85, p. 27. † P. 108. ‡ British Critic.


§ Newman, on Justification, p. 260.

Such, and many more such views, were propagated by men of learning, and of high moral worth, led, alas! unduly to exalt an earthly Church, and build her up at the sacrifice of truth itself. Rome became the model for her restored greatness, and although, indeed, they would fain sweep away some of her grosser idolatries, they would reinstate her power, her pomps, and her infallibility. But the Papacy cannot be so disorganized. Our Church must altogether remain "*out of her*," or we must altogether merge into oneness with herself. Yes; and is not the time already come when this is proved a melancholy fact? for how many, alas! among the ablest of those, who then stood upon the mere threshold of her doors, aiming professedly, only to restore our establishment, to what they called "primitive, or apostolic catholicity," seeking to amalgamate her creeds and rituals, with our own,—*now* stand forth as among the devoted priesthood of the Roman hierarchy; or, as her most zealous members and advocates, admitted and sealed within the fatal gates of her apostasy.

Mr. Grey, was one of the most amiable disciples of this new school, and it was natural, that Lady Gertrude Austyn, circumstanced as she was, should hail the companionship of her new friends, as a blessing long coveted, and now unexpectedly realized. Nor was it surprising that she soon became influ-

enced by the views they held, gradually imbibing theories, so peculiarly congenial to the frame of mind in which they found her. She had formed many intimacies among the Roman Catholic families at Florence, many of whom were both exemplary in conduct, and attractive in manners ; but the great difference between their religious opinions, seemed to prohibit the cultivation of any closer friendship. Lady Gertrude, however, had frequently accompanied some of these to the services of the Romish Church, drawn to them more by her love of its inspiring music, and imposing ceremonies, than by the slightest desire to become a convert ; and yet her mind remained not wholly unimpressed. By degrees, a solemn shadowing of a vague mysterious sanctity, would for a time, steal over her senses, and then she knelt down with the worshippers around her at the foot of a crucifix, with its delicately sculptured figure, enclosed within a canopy of gorgeous workmanship and costly furniture, the light of a suspended lamp, falling with peculiar effect upon the chiselled face, and she felt awed into a sublimity of devotion, very unlike the calm earnestness of the soul's religion, which, nevertheless, deceived her. And soon, she bowed down with equal fervour before a beautiful Madonna and her holy Child ; and when she saw the eager, tearful eyes of those who by her side, knelt with uplifted hands, imploring the "Virgin Mother" to

intercede for them with her Son, all seemed so real and impressive, so natural that a Son should grant a mother's petition, that once her parted lips had almost uttered the rising prayer, "Hear me, too, thou holy Mother of God!" But when, in the stillness of her own chamber, she took her Bible, and there read the simple, touching narrative of our Lord's crucifixion, faith realizing that scene of suffering and confusion;—oh! how unlike it was, she thought, to the gorgeous panoply of the sculptured representation, to which she had that morning knelt. Nailed to a cross of roughest material and workmanship, surrounded by scoffs and impious jests, and blasphemous taunts, his excruciating thirst denied even a cup of water! Oh! what hand, what art could adequately define, the faintest outline of that surpassing scene? "What want I more," she exclaimed, "to remind me of that wondrous sacrifice, the unspeakable sufferings of my Redeemer? or, of the great work of atonement finished on that ignominious cross even for *my* salvation? Can it be, that the 'Holy One,' who while on earth, rarely knew where to lay His sacred head; who was the very embodiment of truth and holiness,—*can* be honoured by such false pictures of himself, as that sculptured crucifix, with all its accompanying display of costly gems, and hangings of richest velvet with their fringe of gold, and lighted artificially with



tapers and candles, as false in their mimicry of heaven's light, as the crucifix was of a crucified Redeemer? Oh! perish all such poor, idolatrous, delusive excitements, and leave me only the pure, unadulterated, divinely inspired record—*my Bible!*” Then, deeply did she mourn over her unscriptural, unsanctified emotion, before the image of the Madonna, when her heart had well nigh echoed its “amen” to invocations, blasphemously addressed to the Virgin Mary. In the sacred texts of holy Scripture, no such recognition of Mary as an intercessor could be found. She was, indeed, “blessed among women,” as the pure, the pious, and devoted mother of our Lord according to the flesh; but, touching His Godhead, He was her Saviour, not her Son. Many passages of holy writ proved this. When a child in the temple, and rebuked by His mother, “Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing;” what was His remarkable reply? “Wist ye not, that I must be about my Father’s business?” Child as He was, He spake with dignified authority in His character of “*God the Son,*” in whose mission for man’s salvation, (His Father’s business,) His earthly parents could have no part nor lot; although, when again acting in His human nature, He immediately “went down with them,” and, with obedient and touching submission, was “subject to them” as

their child. Yet more forcibly was this illustrated at the marriage feast in Cana ; when Mary, *interceding* as it were, in behalf of her friends, who “wanted wine,” she told Jesus, “they have no wine ;” what was *then* His emphatic answer, “Woman, what have I to do with thee ?” *Not* in rebuke, but because, in presence of His assembled disciples, He was about to “manifest His glory,” *to act as God* in the exhibition of His first miracle, and He would show them, perhaps to warn them against the idolatry He foresaw, that in the works of His divinity, even His mother could be *no intercessor*, and that, in connexion with *His Godhead*, she was no more than “woman,” herself needing His atoning blood. And Mary understood Him. She did not reiterate her appeal, but meekly desired the servants, “whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.” Again, when told that “His mother and His brethren stood without, desiring to speak with Him,” He immediately asked, “Who is my mother ?” and then, pointing to His disciples, He replied, with the calm consciousness of divinity, without the slightest reference to Mary, the mother of His human nature, “Behold, my mother and my brethren ! For, whosoever shall do the will of my Father, which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

Lady Gertrude, fixed her whole mind upon the

sacred text, and was appalled at what she had well nigh done. She closed her Bible, and meekly bowing her head upon her clasped hands, she acknowledged Christ to be, indeed, the *only* Mediator between God and man, our *only* "advocate with the Father," and in His name, and for His sake, she asked to be kept from idolatry.

From that time, Lady Gertrude frequented the magnificent churches of Italy, only as she would visit the opera, to gratify her taste for music, and all that was artistically beautiful, without a thought, as to whether the "Spirit of the Lord was there." Subsequently, when at Rome, to which place Lord Errisford, had been unexpectedly summoned, she received another lesson, calculated to check any advance towards approximation to the Roman Catholic faith. She was accompanying the daughter of a nobleman, to the Cheisa del —, when suddenly the young Italian turned another way, and laughingly exclaimed—

"Not there, not there, *mia cara*, I have to say five Ave Marias to-day, before the shrine of the Madonna, for telling tales, but really, the Madonna in this Cheisa, is so ugly, that I can never kneel before her and feel religious." *

"Oh! Ida," replied Lady Gertrude, "ought not

* "Mornings among the Jesuits," by Rev. H. Seymour, 3rd Ed., p. 33.

that alone, to convince you how much of delusion mingles with your adoration? You *say* that you do not pray to the *image*, but really to the Virgin Mary in heaven, when you kneel down before it to ask her intercessions. *If* so, it matters little how ugly, or unlike herself the image of the shrine may be; your prayers must equally ascend to heaven, and the Virgin Mary as willingly hear you."

"But, do you not know," said her companion solemnly, and in a tone of surprise, "that the blessed Virgin is 'personally, physically, and really inherent, and *present* in many of the images representing herself, that she may receive from faithful worshippers, her due adoration?' * This is a great mystery, *mia Bella*, but not less true, and therefore, I like to go to the shrine of —, where she is so exquisitely sculptured, that I do believe, she cannot fail to choose such a casket for her holy presence."

Lady Gertrude, looked at her companion with an incredulous smile, but seeing how seriously she had spoken, she forebore remark; nevertheless, she no longer felt inclined to accompany her friend beyond the door of the church, where she bade her farewell, and returned home sorrowful and shocked.

* Quoted in Faber's "Facts and Assertions," from Pet. d Medrano. Roset. Therl. p. 311.

CHAPTER VI.

“ We pine for kindred nature,
To mingle with our own ;
For communings more full and high,
Than aught by mortals known.”

A FEW days only after the incident which closed our last chapter, Lord Errisford announced to his daughter, the arrival of Sir Willis and Lady Mowbray in Rome, which Lady Gertrude welcomed, as the renewal of an intimacy so pleasantly began at Florence, and with a delight, proportioned to her desire for more congenial society than she had yet found elsewhere. The younger members more especially, and their accomplished tutor, Mr. Grey, seemed to offer the companionship for which she yearned ; their mystic views of religion harmonizing well with her own, without apparently, betraying her faith into the idolatries of Rome. She could now do something, tangible, as it were, towards her own salvation ; and she listened with intense

interest, to the doctrines of a Church, into whose maternal arms, she could throw her responsibilities and fears. She had only now, passively to receive its creeds, to reverence its rituals, and obey its authority ; this passive obedience being in fact, her soul's religion and rule of faith. And, oh ! blessed assurance, as one baptized within its glorious pale, she had received that "new birth in Christ," which she had hitherto believed must, unavoidably, be accompanied with a sanctified heart ; the "spirit bearing witness," that the soul had renounced all willing allegiance to the world, its "pomps and vanities," for fellowship with the "people of God ;" had renounced the "works of the flesh," for the "works of the Spirit ;" the service of Satan, for the service of the "Lord of heaven." She had been taught, that the "new birth" of Scripture, was actually the soul's passing away from "death in sin," to life in Christ ; that it was faith realized and proved by works of righteousness ; the continual warfare of the soul against evil tempers, evil passions, and evil associations, while striving after the "fruits of the Spirit," in holiness of life, serving God through "works, meet for repentance," works, not in themselves bearing part in our justification, but as the *essential effects of that justification*. Lady Gertrude had learnt all this from Mr. Everard, and had seen it practically enforced by his own example,

but, alas ! she had as yet found no permanent evidence of this "new birth" in herself, although now told, that she had already received it through the channel of baptism, and she ventured one morning, to express this to Mr. Grey.

"Dear Lady Gertrude," he gently replied, "you must not reason upon these deep mysteries. The fountain is pure although its streams, passing through human nature, must mingle with earthly dross, which it is the Church's mission to cleanse away, by its absolutions, upon such as 'truly repent them of their sins.' It is happily *yours*, as a true daughter of our apostolic Church, to be a recipient of its holy sacraments, in the fullest extent, and you must live up to your privileges—not question or doubt them. Remember, that God has placed the salvation of souls within the keeping of this Church, appointing His ministers, to 'bind' and 'loose' them, to 'retain' or to 'remit' their sins, as you will read in St. Matthew's Gospel. To her is thus given 'the keys' which can alone open the door, through which the baptized pass to a blessed and holy immortality. This is Christ's own appointment, and surely we are bound to respect and obey it. 'We cannot help ourselves, we have no choice. Obedience, therefore, to our Church, is obedience to God, in the highest sense as to His appointment. And, therefore, such obedience contains within itself,

somehow, its own protection, has within it safety, and *more than safety*. When we quit her guidance, in pursuit of any apparent good, we lose this security.'” *

“But,” said Gertrude, starting, and in a tone of surprise, “the Roman Catholics hold this doctrine. *Their Church* claims, as exclusively her own charge, ‘the keys’ you speak of, and the channel of absolution! Now two Churches cannot be the *only* true Church? One or other must be fallible and strangely deluded.”

“So far as the groundwork of ordinances and powers go,” replied Mr. Grey, reddening, “the two are literally one—‘one catholic and apostolic Church,’ founded on that ‘Rock’ against which nothing shall prevail. It is true that Rome has, alas! presumptuously added to the pure faith of our common mother many a spurious offspring, not legitimately claiming her sustenance; nevertheless, she is still, and ever must be, true to the essential spirit of her holy office, departing from her apostolic character less in vital doctrines than in her rituals, therefore, in common with ourselves, she still holds the keys, the sacraments, and the power ‘to retain and to remit sins,’ committed by Christ Himself to the œcumenical Church at large, and that Church must ever be the sacred depository of ‘One faith, one baptism, one Lord.’”

* Tract 68, p. 90.

"Nay," said Lady Gertrude, irresistibly laughing, "Rome holds no such amiable affinity to Protestantism. She has excommunicated us as heretics, and burnt us by dozens, long ago. She will burn you, too, Mr. Grey, if you call her either the rebellious child, or the spurious offspring."

"Lady Gertrude," solemnly replied Mr. Grey, looking pained, "beware how you lightly jest upon sacred things."

"God forbid," retorted Gertrude, "that I should ever tread upon holy ground with unhallowed steps, or taunt what is really sacred with even a sacrilegious thought. But forgive me when I say, that it does seem absurd, and very earthly, that two Churches should be at such bitter enmity—such childish animosity—if, as you say, there is no just ground of quarrel between the two parties, in all essential attributes so thoroughly *at one*. For why does Rome excommunicate Protestants as heretics, and Protestants eschew Rome as apostate, if they verily, and indeed, hold, as you declare, 'one faith, one baptism, one Lord?'"

"Doubtless, for the sins of both," replied Mr. Grey, "each have been severely visited by the evils of schism and separation. This is a judgment upon the Church, and she has been scathed indeed, but not uprooted; for, happily, neither party have forfeited our apostolic charter. Peter denied the Lord, but he never apostatized from the faith, and in him

was vested the Church on earth ; so we, his successors, have denied our birthright, are grown careless, and we languish, but are not destroyed. And Rome has wandered far from her 'first love,' but still is she the 'Bride of Christ,' the 'mother and mistress of all other churches.'* But we now see a dawn of better things. Like estranged children we are returning to union and reconciliation ; we, through greater diligence and faithfulness in our high commission, to a deeper sense of our position, our office, and our sacraments, and Rome is drawing towards us, offering prayers and fastings for our return ; no longer the persecuting enemy, but as 'a gentle, elder sister. Yes, I do believe, that the time is not far distant, when she, yielding her idolatries, and we our prejudices and indifference, shall both again return to apostolic purity and union, and so be once more amalgamated as one visible, as well as one Catholic Church, and her bishops and priests on either side, become the obedient and holy sons of an apostolic and holy mother."

A momentary gleam of joy passed over the pale face of Mr. Grey, as he seemed to catch a glimpse of millennial glory, but it was all illusion, the bright meteor of his beautiful vision fell, and left a mere utopian shadow, before the simple, earnest appeal of Lady Gertrude, who, almost paralysed with astonishment,

* Council Trident., Sess. 7, p. 87,

meekly asked, opening her Bible, "But, Mr. Grey, *where* shall I find all this in Scripture? Where is it said, positively or prophetically, that the *Church of Rome* is exclusively the 'Bride of Christ,' 'the mother of all the churches?'"

"Alas! for poor human nature," answered Mr. Grey, "seeking knowledge of those deep and 'hidden things of God,' into which angels must not look. Be not like unhappy Eve, tempted by an evil spirit, to taste forbidden fruit, or to reason upon its mysterious nature. Rather keep reason in obedient subjection to the Church, which," added he, smiling faintly, "you promised me yesterday to do. Believe what she teaches; hear what her voice proclaims, and see only what she wisely reveals to you, and then you will have her blessing and her absolution."

"But if her voice proclaims anything which is contrary to Holy Scripture," asked Gertrude, anxiously, "then, which am I to heed?"

"Believe that she can never so err," replied Mr. Grey; "in her keeping is the unction of Divine truth, and, therefore, you may implicitly follow her heavenly guidance. Depend upon it that individual judgment can never be trusted as the interpreter of a Divine revelation. 'When the sense of Scripture, as interpreted by reason, is contrary to the sense given to it by Catholic antiquity, we ought to side

with the latter,' and 'when the present Church speaks contrary to our private notions, it is pious to sacrifice our own opinions to that of the Church.' " *

Lady Gertrude was silent, yet not convinced. She remembered that it was the Scriptures themselves, and not "the Church," which were said to make us "wise unto salvation;" but she forbore reply; and after a long pause, she rather abruptly looked up, and said, "Where do you find the injunction to baptize infants, Mr. Grey?"

"In the traditions of the ancient fathers, and in usages of antiquity," replied Mr. Grey. "It was, doubtless, an apostolic appointment, although you may find no *direct* command expressed in Holy Scripture."

"Is not that remarkable," asked Gertrude, "if, as you say, infants cannot be saved without it? I find whenever baptism is mentioned in the New Testament, it is always with reference to *faith* as its antecedent: '*If thou believest with thine heart, thou mayst be baptized,*' therefore, it appears to me that faith, not baptism, is the primary channel of grace."

"This applies to the early converts to Christianity," replied Mr. Grey, "when as yet the Holy Ghost was not given to the Church; but after the day of Pentecost the apostles themselves, and subsequently their successors, became the channels

* Newman's Popular Protestantism.

through which the sacraments were henceforth to be administered. 'Baptism is a perfect cleansing of the soul from all sin, and thus justification is applied to the baptized, as actually 'born of water and of the Spirit,' and made one in Christ; for 'to be justified is to receive the Divine presence within us;' * 'justification, not being by imputation merely, but the act of God, imparting His Divine presence to the soul through baptism, and so making us temples of the Holy Ghost.' " †

"I thought," said Gertrude, meekly, "that our justification was *wholly* through the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Is there more than *one* baptism then?"

"Certainly not," replied Mr. Grey. "'Baptism is a plenary and absolute remission of all sin whatever, original and actual, with which the baptized person is laden,' ‡ and it can be applied but once."

Lady Gertrude turned pale, and looking timidly up, she asked in a low anxious voice, "And if we sin *after baptism*, Mr. Grey, what *then* can save us?"

Mr. Grey mournfully shook his head; he dared not meet the beseeching, searching countenance before him. "'We have,'" he said, "'no account

* Newman's Lectures on Rom., p. 160.

† Dr. Pusey's Letter to the Bishop of Oxford, p. 70.

‡ Newman's Popular Protestantism.

in Scripture of any second remission, obliteration, extinction from all sin, such as is bestowed on us by the one baptism for the remission of sins.' * 'The fountain has been, indeed, opened to wash away sin and uncleanness ; but we dare not promise (the baptized) a second time the same easy access to it which they once had, that way is open but once, and it were to abuse the powers of the keys intrusted to us again to pretend to admit in any other. Now there remains only the baptism of tears—a baptism obtained, as the fathers have said, with much fasting and with many prayers.' †

Lady Gertrude now arose, her temper overcame her self-command, and she exclaimed indignantly, "Then perish the fathers who could dare leave a legacy of such a creed. It is '*the blood of Christ* which cleanseth from *all sin*.' Oh ! Mr. Grey, beware how you wrong that holy, blessed Redeemer, by doubting the free and perfect sufficiency of His precious blood, let Him apply it to the sinner when He will."

"In baptism we were 'washed, once for all in His blood,' and God forbid that I should doubt either its efficacy or its sufficiency," calmly replied Mr. Grey ; "but if, after we are thus washed, and our sins thus absolved, we 'again sin, there remaineth no more such complete absolution in this

* Tract 68, p. 54.

† Ib. p. 54.

life. We must be judged according to our deeds.*
‘There are but two periods of absolute cleansing—
baptism and the day of judgment.’” †

“This is terrible,” murmured Lady Gertrude, as, greatly agitated, she arose, and walked to the window.

“It is, indeed, an awful thought,” replied Mr. Grey, “to such as will not accept, in humble faith, the benefits not only *offered*, but absolutely and freely given in this holy sacrament of baptism. Lady Gertrude, do *you* beware how you esteem it lightly, and undervalue its blessings in yourself.”

To this Lady Gertrude made no reply, but impatiently threw open the Venetian blinds, as if to receive both air and light, direct from heaven itself, in earnest of a better hope! Her friend, Miss Mowbray, had been present during the whole of this interview, silently listening to the conversation, every now and then looking up from her work, with a varying countenance, alternately to the speakers; sometimes almost breathlessly watching the effect of the young tutor’s theology upon the mind to which it was so earnestly addressed. She now arose, and going to Lady Gertrude, took her hand, and gently said, “Dear Gertrude, fear nothing. Be submissive, and believe that the Church will keep and

* Tract 68, p. 68.

† Pusey’s Letter to the Bishop of Oxford, p. 93.

direct you. In her bosom have we not '*more than safety?*' "

Lady Gertrude remained silent, scarcely returning the pressure of Miss Mowbray's hand, so absorbed was she in things beyond the present. Her frightened mind had spread its wings, and for a moment hovered round the flickering light of "vain traditions," but now it had wandered higher, and found rest as its memory nestled beside the "old arm-chair," where so often sat Mr. Everard, with the Bible before him, setting forth in its own pure, simple meaning, the "gospel of salvation," to the wayworn traveller, or to the unstable youth—to the repentent sinner, or to the sullen unbeliever—to the light in heart, or to the cast-down mourner. To each and all, he had but one warning to offer, one message to deliver; varied as in expression they both might be, in substance they were the same: "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die, saith the Lord." "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins." "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to the Lord, which is your reasonable service." All this was realised to Gertrude, like a living picture, passing along the perspective of her memory, although it was but a lightning flash, swift as its

course, bright in its presence, leaving behind it a "darkness more dark." Large tear-drops stood on her fringed eyelids, as she thought of the contrast between that "study scene" in the "far west," where she, too, had often been a learner in those holy themes, and of the present, in which her faith had quailed almost to doubt and fear.



Mr. Grey had not risen from his seat, but leaning on the table, he had buried his face in both his hands; the veins of his forehead swelled almost to bursting, until the blood again receding, he became pale as death. Why was this emotion? Had *he* not, too, borne a message of consolation to the baptized, and been faithful to his mission for the Church. Yes, but oh! who could tell how often, when no eye could see him, no ear could listen to the sighs which arose from an overwrought heart, the fearful thought of "sin after baptism," had brought the terrors of the law before him? And now the sweet, low, trembling voice of Lady Gertrude seemed again and again to ask, "But if we sin after baptism, Mr. Grey, what *then* can save us?" What, indeed! "Baptism of *tears*?" He had wept such tears as could wash away ten thousand sins, could that avail him for their remission; but sin remained, ay, and multiplied day by day. "Fasting, and prayers, and penances?" His pale face and wasted hands, while yet the blood of youth bounded freely through

his veins, told how he had fasted ; and for penance he had resigned all that was dearest to him ; bright prospects, home, and country, and for what ? perhaps, to " sow tares among the wheat," rather than bring to the fair hills of Italy, the " glad tidings of great joy."

All this passed through his mind, as he sat silent and subdued, knowing that from that hour, Gertrude would probably fear where she had hoped, and doubted where she had believed. What then had he done ? " And yet," he said within himself, " what am I that I should judge the Church ? Apostles founded her ; holy fathers have interpreted her blessed mysteries, and holy men, pure in heart and sound in faith, now seek to build up her tottering walls, which an enemy within herself had well nigh brought down to ruins. They must be right, and shall I question such an authority, or doubt her power and her truth ? No, it is my own corrupt and ill-trained reason, which, like an uncurbed horse, has overthrown my better mind, and still it needs an iron chain to bridle in its wild, impetuous pace ? The Church is right, and I will obey her. I will ' labour more abundantly,' in gathering the lambs to her fold, in spite of the world without and the world within." Had not his own pupil and his gentle sister yielded their prejudices and errors, and their parents were beginning, like themselves, to embrace the pri-

vileges and the blessings of an obedient surrender to the authority of the holy Catholic Church? and thus encouraged, he would go on through every difficulty and persecution to win souls,—the soul of Gertrude within her safe and sacred pale, while he would be more stringent in his own duties, more self-renouncing and austere, in his own life and practice.

All these reflections, both of Mr. Grey and his young antagonist, passed through their minds in far shorter time than it has taken to record them, and perhaps it was well that a silence almost painful to both parties, was now broken by the announcement of Sir Willis and Lady Mowbray, who came, as they said, to seek their truant daughter, and to induce the Lady Gertrude to accompany them all that evening to the opera. They had for a moment looked inquiringly from Gertrude to Miss Mowbray, and from their daughter to Mr. Grey, aware that something had cast a shadow there ; but they well knew how seldom the young chaplain slumbered in his work, and therefore guessed that some religious disagreement had a little ruffled the even tenor of more common-place discussions. Mr. Grey immediately bade “good morning” to the Lady Gertrude and Mrs. Seymour, who had, also, been silent as an automaton during the morning’s conversation, and then, with his usual gentle and gentlemanly address, saying “*au revoir*” to the others, he left the Palazzo, and was



soon lost in reverie, beneath the arched branches of a neighbouring orange grove.

Lady Gertrude, when again alone with Mrs. Seymour, fell into the abstract listlessness of a mind disturbed and wearied. The latter perceived it, and looking up from her embroidery, she said, "Dearest girl, I really think the less you see of these Mowbrays the better. That young tutor would turn the brains of a saint who had not wit enough to see his drift. Amongst them all, they will make you an out-and-out Tractarian, if you do not take care."

"They are not Tractarians themselves, that I know of," answered Gertrude, irritated; "nor do I know what constitutes one; I wish you would inform me."

"Well," replied Mrs. Seymour, smiling, "I believe it would be as difficult to define one, as to define the *Platypus*, which has two classes of genus in one; and yet we could scarcely say how far it partakes of the distinctive character either of the duck or beaver; and so a Tractarian partakes of both Protestant and Papist, and yet it would be difficult to say which of the two creeds most distinctly mark the man."

The naturally generous temper of Lady Gertrude was soon restored by this good-humoured sally of one who had good right to retort her own ungraciousness. She replied, laughing, "Dear Mrs. Sey-

mour, what a cruel critique upon my birds of paradise ! The Mowbrays are of the true High Church breed, and Mr. Grey the perfection of an Oxford student, always aristocratic in address, dignified in controversy, refined in intellect, and in heart the most unselfish. No wonder that he is so beloved by his pupil, and revered by the whole Mowbray family."

"And so admired by the Lady Gertrude," archly rejoined Mrs. Seymour. "I was warning you against heresy in faith ; but I fear I must go deeper still, and warn you against heresy in heart."

"Oh ! I am not the least in *love* with Mr. Grey, if that is what you mean," replied Gertrude ; "I have no wish, I assure you, to outrival poor, dear Clara Mowbray."

"The wind of his love sets that way, does it ?" said Mrs. Seymour, inquiringly.

"Not that I am aware of," replied Gertrude ; "but I am quite sure that if he has a worshipper, it is Clara ; although, I am equally so, that she is perfectly unconscious, that her worship is ever likely to take the form of love. I wish it may on both sides do so, for they are well suited to each other."

"But would *la madre* like the match ?" asked Mrs. Seymour.

"I see no reason why she should not," said Gertrude. "Clara will have enough money for both,

if that must come in as an item in the matrimonial balance sheet. But, ill-natured persons say, that Lady Mowbray is graciously inclined to make Clara my young step-mother, considerately judging, that we should be happy together as turtle doves, being so nearly of the same age; and if this rumour have but a glass foundation, even an old Earl may stand in the way of a young tutor, archangel though he be."

"How can you, dear Gertrude," said Mrs. Seymour, give ear to so scandalous a report? It is quite enough to say, that her ladyship would fain graft *you* upon the towering tree of the Mowbrays."

"Oh! that has been settled long ago," replied Gertrude, laughing, "*au reste*, I may give ear without giving credence to the slander. Lady Mowbray is of the world, and the world judges her by its own worldliness. However, as I am quite sure, that papa thinks of nothing mortal but myself, or of nothing material but diplomatic despatches, and how best he can convert this sublunary earth of ours to a political millenium, Clara may chance to be Mrs. Grey, with an archbishopric in the background of her mother's revolving panorama."

"Well, I am sure," said Mrs. Seymour, "Mr. Grey has my cordial good wishes, for he is a very nice young man, and Clara is a thoroughly good girl with none of her mother's folly about her. But I

do hope, that he will not stay here long enough to lead you onwards from Oxford to Rome, for, say as you please, darling, depend upon it, he is fast journeying there himself."

"I think not," gravely replied Gertrude, a little piqued; "and after what you have heard this morning, you surely need fear nothing on that ground for *me*. I shall never turn either Tractarian, or Romanist, so long as they hold aught else than the precious Bible, as their rule of faith."

Poor Gertrude! she was indeed strong in purpose, and believed what she asserted, but she had already lost ground in faith; already had begun to set undue value upon the outward forms of religious profession, neglecting her Bible for these, notwithstanding her avowed reverence for its holy character, as the Christian's only guide to truth; but she began to doubt her own responsibility in matters of theology, and gradually ceased to study the Scriptures, without limitation, until it became more and more "a sealed book" to her conscience. But conscience could not immediately be silenced, its "still, small voice" continually reproved her, and engendered a restlessness within, which was very unlike the "peace of believing." So now, her heart, like fallow ground, was ready to receive any seed, whether of "tares or wheat," which might be cast upon it. It is true, as we have seen, that there were times, when

a root, here and there, which had deeply struck, would send forth a shoot of its own good kind, and yield buds of a sincere faith; a sense of sin, and yearnings for the fruit of a holier life; but the delicate off-shoots were watered with tears, more of impatience than penitence, and propped up with resolutions formed upon impulse, not upon grace. Satan saw his advantage, and, as in that beautiful etching of Retzsch's, he played his game with subtilty, allowing poor Gertrude to take piece after piece of his kingdom, while he kept her soul in constant check, and she saw not the angel of mercy, weeping behind her, having no power, because no commission, to restrain the tempted, or to foil the tempter. Unarmed with the "sword of the Spirit," undefended by the shield of prayer, she went to the battle for play, not victory, she trusted to herself, and found herself a broken reed!

Mr. Grey touched no more, directly, on baptism or the higher doctrines of his faith, in subsequent interviews with Lady Gertrude. He had been taught rather to exercise reserve in such, especially on the atonement, until the souls of his charge were prepared to receive them by previous discipline. Now, therefore, he led her on through lessons of obedience, and unquestioning belief in the authority of the Church. The "eucharistic sacrament" was gradually developed to her according to his own in-


terpretation of its holy mysteries. He, indeed, repudiated "transubstantiation" as a Romish error; but substituted for it "consubstantiation," the one changing the elements altogether, the other, only in part. "Rome, in this respect," he said, "has the truth, though mingled with error, and clouded and injured by it, for it is literally true, that the consecrated bread is Christ's body, a real superlocal presence in the holy sacrament." * To the bishops and priests of our Church, is intrusted the awful and mysterious "power of making the body and blood of Christ." †

Mr. Grey, at other times, cautiously touched upon the sacred character of the eucharistic altar, as being that on which, a literal, although unbloody, sacrifice was offered, contending that much of the present destitute condition of the Church might be traced to an unholy surrender of these appointments, making them of no effect, and so losing its sacred unction, until it had become more a political, than a spiritual institution. And then, he dwelt more strongly upon the "piety of church architecture and decoration," explaining the symbolic meaning of the altar furniture, with its variety and holy devices, such as had been recently introduced in some of our Anglican churches, and which Gertrude had seen, but not understood, bidding her remember the Psalmist's allu-

* Tract 90, p. 58.

† Froude's Remains, vol. i., p. 326.

sion to such in his prophetic description of the Church, "the king's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold," which, he conceived, more than justified those pious offerings,—needlework and costly embroidery of holy women, and obedient daughters, who like those of "Tyre, shall be there with a gift." To all this Gertrude listened with intense interest, it had Scripture for its sanction, and she wondered why the evangelical party called such offerings, "weak and beggarly elements, the carnal ordinances of the middle ages!" And from that time she ceased to study her Bible, so far more absorbed was her mind in devising some such glorious "needlework," for the adornment of a church, in whose decorations she determined "piously" to engage; decorations which should surpass in beauty and costliness, all she had ever seen or heard of, that she too, might be memorialized as a "daughter of Tyre," bringing gifts worthy of their high destination, trusting no less to her father's generous indulgence, than to his wealth. Mr. Grey next enjoined a cautious use of extempore prayer, even in her closet, and directed her to follow only the order of reading the Holy Scriptures prescribed by the Church, in which she must especially beware of a cavilling or speculative spirit; and further recommended frequent auricular confessions as a wholesome check upon the conscience, although he did




not enforce it as positively commanded by the Anglican Church, such confessions to be followed by fastings and penance, according to the judgment of the pastors to whom she so confessed ; while, subsequently, he earnestly pressed upon her the necessity of reserve in her intercourse with her Earlswood relations, the low views of Mr. Everard, being so wholly opposed to those of the *true* Apostolic Church.

Thus, day by day, did Lady Gertrude imbibe doctrines which drew her not only from the pure and simple "*word of God*," to human traditions and systems ; but from that spirit of self-examination and humility, and spiritual communion with God, to her own works of supererogation for justification, and a proud reliance upon human means, and human merits, for salvation and absolution. Nor do we know how much further she might have been led, in this dangerous perversion of truth, had not the serious illness of Mrs. Everard at that moment engaged her better feelings, and summoned her unexpectedly to an immediate return to England.

We have seen the sequel, and how the poison of error had already infused itself into a heart, still nevertheless, often struggling against holier convictions ; but these grew fainter and fainter, till she ceased to "run for the prize of her high calling in

Christ Jesus," because it had become to her, as an uncertain race dependent upon ordinances, and efforts, over which her own soul seemed incapable of exercising control. For some time she had altogether concealed, even from Alice Everard, her altered views, but when accidental discussions called them forth, she tacitly avowed the influence obtained over her by Mr. Grey, and the Mowbrays. Nevertheless, she practised a reserve towards them, in all the deeper grounds of her new faith, so foreign to her naturally open disposition, that neither Alice, nor Mr. Everard, in the least, suspected the extent to which she had fostered them.

And now the hour drew near, when she must again leave her foster home, and all its holy influences. Lord Errisford had informed her, that they should return at once to Rome, where business might detain him for some time. Mr. Everard had very earnestly endeavoured to persuade him against this, and, for his daughter's sake, to return to his patrimonial estate in England, there to employ his powers in a narrower, but not less beneficial sphere ; nor, to her credit be it said, was the voice of Gertrude herself wanting to effect this salutary change. But the Earl was as completely a *missionary*, in his patrician devotedness, as the most zealous, self-renouncing martyr of religious Reformation, has ever been in a holier cause ; each surrendering himself



to one object, resigning all that could stand in the way of its accomplishment, even at the cost of every personal comfort and interest. No offers from his country could induce him to accept office, as ambassador to the Roman States, but he spared neither time, advice, nor money, to aid the diplomatic views and services of the friend who held the embassy, he had ostensibly refused.

The trying hour of many separations came speedily on. Young Algernon Everard was first to break the social party assembled at Earlswood, on his return to Eton, leaving home with a heavy heart, but with a manly resolution against any display of sorrow, which could only have aggravated that of his father and Alice, under present circumstances. Lord Errisford would fain have taken him under his wing to Italy, for there was in the boy, a spirit so congenial to his own, that rarely, perhaps never, had he loved a boy so well ; but to this proposal, Mr. Everard returned so decided a negative, that nothing further could be urged in its favour.

The parting between the sister cousins was felt most deeply on both sides ; for there was a painful presentiment in each, which added to the bitterness of their separation. And yet it was no supernatural foreshadowing of evil or sorrow, sometimes mercifully permitted to prepare the weak in spirit for a coming struggle. Natural causes wholly

acted to produce an apprehension, unsubstantial as it might be. Alice had seen with deep anxiety that the principles of Gertrude had sustained a shock, and she dared not think how soon their foundation might give way. On the other hand, Lady Gertrude felt that all within herself was not right. She had in many respects deceived one, who had every claim to unreserved confidence, not, indeed, by actual falsehood, but in so keeping back the truth, that Alice was left ignorant of much which, if then revealed, had spared both from future sorrow and misunderstanding. But who can foresee where the growth of suspicion will stay, when once the seed is sown from which the fatal creeper germinates. Nevertheless, if thus, some vague, uncertain shadow, passed over the hearts of the cousins, it touched not, as yet, the bright halo of friendship's sacred fire,—a fire which, alas ! so rarely burns through life's existence ; for it is one too pure to bear deterioration, and many an evil spirit hovers round to cast the dross which dims it, within its hallowed precincts, if for a moment the flame divides which is only safe in union !

Many times did the cousins embrace, as if for the last time, before the last farewell could indeed be spoken on either side. Alice, whose feelings rarely spent themselves in tears, became deadly pale, her quivering lips betraying the emotion which oppressed her. The carriage was heard drawing up to

the corridor, beneath the window of their room, where for years they had lived and loved together. Once more they were locked in fond embrace too sorrowful for words. At length Alice broke the painful silence. "Gertrude, my beloved, now let us part; it is agony thus to prolong what must be done. Farewell, my darling, and may the blessing of God go with you; but, oh! Gertrude, you will never give up the Word of God for the faith of any Church on earth, of which Christ is not 'the first and the last,' our *only* Saviour, ever ready to hear when we pray; to give when we ask? Will you promise daily to search the Scriptures for yourself, and let no man beguile you from the 'truth as it is in Jesus;' but pray the blessed Holy Spirit to teach, direct, and bless you?"

Gertrude clung to the bosom of Alice, and sobbing with all the vehemence of her nature, she could only murmur, "Pray for me, Alice;" and then the gushing fountain of her tears overpowered all self-command. A glass of water stood upon a table near them, Alice raised it to the lips of her cousin, and its refreshing coolness revived and composed the weeping girl; she was about to replace it upon the table, when Gertrude took it from her, and a sweet smile beaming through her tearful eyes, she in her turn, raised it, that Alice too might drink. "Take it," she said, "my own dear Alice; when shall we,

together, taste of the same cup again ? Ah ! *when, indeed ?* ”

Ernest Willoughby knocked at the door, entreating both the girls to come down, as Lord Errisford waited for Gertrude. Once more the cousins embraced, and the word “farewell” was murmured ; then Gertrude, hurriedly throwing open the door, shook hands warmly with Ernest, but without another word ran down stairs.

Again her tears fell fast, as silently she hung around her uncle’s neck, and received his fervent blessing ; then springing into the carriage, followed by her father, was soon out of sight, and Earlswood seen no more.


Alice, who had previously taken leave of the Earl, remained in her room, for she dared not trust herself or Gertrude to meet again down stairs. But soon was Ernest by her side, affording every consolation in human power to bestow ; and the well-regulated mind of the pious girl, soon exerted itself to think of others, in subduing a sorrow which might appear ungrateful to those yet dearer ones, who remained to love, and to watch over her. But who has not felt the sense of desolateness which seems to pervade all space, where no longer can be seen or heard the presence of a long cherished companion ? Who has not gone back to the vacant room, bearing vestiges of recent desertion, and not felt, as if

nothing on earth could ever fill the void of such devastation? Happily—and let us thank God it is so—the heart is never, in its deepest sorrow, wholly orphaned of blessings, which, like sunbeams, fall on the shadow of its night hours, and gradually rising into light, dispel the darkness, which is soon, if not forgotten, softened into a faint outline of a receding cloud. And so with Alice, although long was Gertrude painfully in her thoughts, yet each day brought its own duties and its pleasures too. Ernest was still with her, and his bright elastic spirit, his unfailing resources of mind and heart to give happiness to others, his peculiarly quick perception of what could best promote it, through the varying phases of human feeling, and his ready adaptation of such resources to circumstances, rendered him of all others, a being to be estimated as a household blessing, when the hearth of a home had few voices left around it, to wake up the melody of bygone days. To Mr. Everard he was all that the most devoted son could be, ever ready to lend him cheerful aid, either in the light hours of recreation, or in the deeper researches of divine philosophy. And what was he not to Alice? She felt his worth, she dearly prized his love, and often would she pray that her own might never grow into idolatry.

But Ernest too must go! Yet an Oxford term was not a journey to Italy; nor did it threaten an

absence from Alice of long and indefinite duration ; so both were comforted by the sweet bird of hope, which in hearts young as their own, sings but the music of unblighted love.

Ernest was now gone, and Alice, leaning on the last gate of the Earlswood avenue, watched the receding form of him, who was the dearest to her on earth. On and on he went, checking his restive steed to the slow pace of his own unwilling departure. Now and then, he turned again to wave his hand for another last adieu, until the road was reached whence it was vain to look again. Alice lingered longer at her watch : she moved not away until the last, the very last faint echo of the horse's tramp died upon her listening ear : then she felt quite alone. Hope was still cherished in her heart, but its voice seemed silent as the grave. Other music, more real to outward sense, rose up with the evening's breeze, and startled her, for it was a long, swelling, plaintive note of some lonely bird, so like the mournful strain of a nightingale, that for a moment it deceived her ; she listened, but all again was hushed : whence did the wanderer come, and whither was it going ? She turned on her homeward way, and felt as if waking from a dream. Earlswood was soon reached, and she repaired at once to her room. She sat down by the table on which stood the glass from which Gertrude and her-



self had for the last time drank together. She had filled it with flowers, and there it remained, a memorial of the absent one. She sighed heavily, then took her Bible, and soon her mind was lost to outward impressions, for her faith rested on the unchangeable promises of the "eternal word," her heart believed them, and the dove of holy peace soon nestled by the side of hope.

CHAPTER VII.

"She was like the palm tree of my heart, her smile so soft and bright,

In the moonlight of my spirit, in its long and dreary night;

Only flower in my heart's deserted garden,—only well

In my life's lonely wilderness, my gentle-eyed gazelle."

PERSIAN SONG.


FOUR years had passed away since Ernest Willoughby first entered Oxford as a student, with a view of entering holy orders, when he had completed the required terms, and taken his degree, he was ordained to a curacy, in the neighbourhood of the University, engaged for one year only by the incumbent of a rural district, until his own son, then at college, could permanently succeed him. The year had now expired, and as Ernest had of late been far from well, it was thought advisable that he should visit Earlswood for some weeks, to recruit his health, previously to seeking a re-engagement, or taking priest's orders. He had lost father and

mother, who both died in the same week, cut down by one of those fatal maladies peculiar to the climate of India, which so suddenly attack the human frame, and often desolate a household. His sisters, whom he had never seen, were married and settled in the Presidency of Madras, so that he was now more than ever the adopted son of Mr. Everard, and Earlswood emphatically his *home*; for, although his pecuniary means afforded him an independence, his father had left him considerably less than he was entitled to expect, from the high position which he had filled in the civil service; nevertheless his prospects in the Church were good, a living in the gift of his mother's family having long been promised him, whenever it should become vacant, an event which the great age of its present incumbent seemed to place at no distant period, and on this preferment depended the time of his marriage with Alice Everard, unless her father could be induced to permit it as soon as she became of age, when the promise made to her dying mother would be fulfilled.

Such was the current of events when Ernest Willoughby became again, for a time, an inmate of his Earlswood home, after an absence of more than a year, and four years subsequently to the death of Mrs. Everard.

Nature, moved by the unalterable laws of its great

Creator, had fulfilled the work of its wonderful machinery, while time, with slow, but certain measure, had imperceptibly drawn nearer to the boundary of its own limit within the circle of eternity, as days, and years, and seasons, ay, and countless worlds, far beyond the horizon of our world, had responded to the movement of their omnipotent Ruler. All around the fair lands of Earlswood remained the same. Among its stately woods, its towering cliffs, its fertile glens, no change was visible to the eye, and on the ear fell sweetly as ever the soft murmurings of the gentle stream, while the music of its birds and the fragrance of its flowers had come and gone, and come again, as if four years had passed away without leaving a trace behind them of time's visitation. Would that we could say thus much of its interior world! Death had been there, and taken from its nest the youngest bird so cherished and beloved. The little merry Catherine had fallen a victim to that sweeping scourge, scarlet fever, after only a few days of suffering; and now she lay by her angel mother's side, their spirits again united, but in that "better land" where no more parting could await them. And yet now, on the first anniversary of that dear child's death, Alice Everard leant against the marble sepulchre of her earthly remains, and blest God for the premature removal of that happy child, ere sorrow had changed



the dream of its joyous existence. Scarcely a cloud had fallen on the pathway of her life ; and brief had been her passage through the "dark valley of the shadow of death," for the "light of the Lord" was there ; she saw it, and the last words of the young believer were the praises of a child like and rejoicing spirit. Mr. Everard stood by the side of Alice at the grave, and, like hers, his thoughts, too, were those of chastened thankfulness, but the source of their thanksgiving was not the same. In the father's heart it arose from that perfect submission to the will of God, which, even in its affliction, reposed with unshaken confidence upon the wisdom and the love of Him who appointed it ; nor did he dream, that other feelings had given utterance to the acknowledgment of mercy, from the lips of his living child beside him.

They walked away together, dwelling for awhile only on the many sweet reminiscences linked with the name of their departed little one ; and then, almost unconsciously, they fell into the silent reverie of other thoughts. At length Alice, as if roused by some sudden recollection, said, looking stedfastly at her father, "Papa, do you not think that Ernest is greatly altered?"

Unprepared as Mr. Everard was for such a remark, it did not wholly surprise him ; he answered evasively, "I do not think Ernest is well, my love ;

he has been studying too closely, and his mind is overstrained. He requires a complete change of scene and recreation ; what say you, dearest, to a sea-side excursion ? I have been thinking that it might do us all good, if I can get some one to take my charge for a few weeks, and I trust the time will not be long before your father's blessing, and I trust the blessing of God, may consecrate a union so long promised to you both."

Alice looked up, and a faint blush passed across her pallid cheek, as, pressing her father's arm gratefully, she replied, "There is time enough yet before us, to think of that, dear father : you know I am not quite of age." Then, as if anxious to avoid the subject, she added, cheerfully, "Do let us go to Aberystwith, papa ; Ernest has never been there, and I think we should all enjoy it so very much."

At that moment, the object of their mutual thoughts sprang down from the bank, near which they were passing, as they entered the avenue, on their return home. Mr. Everard playfully exclaimed, "Speak of the evil one, &c., &c., you know the proverb, Ernest?"

Ernest Willoughby gave his arm to Alice, and more gravely than the occasion warranted, replied, "Were you speaking of my evil ways, then ? for, I fear, you admit but a few of my better ones."

Alice looked at him reproachfully, and sighed ;

but Mr. Everard, not in the least appearing to heed the tone of his reply, said, with a forced smile, "I admit you to be a wizard, or gifted with mesmeric clairvoyance to read words you do not hear, and thoughts you cannot see; for it is very true, we were speaking, not only of your evil ways, but of your yet more evil looks; and this poor little girl is fretting herself to a shadow, because she thinks you ill, and doing more with your head than your physical strength can endure."

Ernest felt reproved, and pressing the hand which still rested fondly on his arm, he said, "Bless you, my sweet Alice, I do believe that you love and care for me, far more than I deserve." Then added, with a smile, speaking to Mr. Everard, "You know, sir, that a little learning is a dangerous thing; and a deep draught of divinity studies, as you well remember, I dare say, feeds the soul, but does not tend to adorn the cheek with roses."

"So Alice thinks," replied Mr. Everard; "and she was just pleading in favour of a good sea breeze off the Irish channel, to refresh you both in mind and body. She is for a trip to Aberystwith, and I think the sooner we can go the better; perhaps even my old face will be all the better for a touch of the marine rose."


"Dear pappy," said Alice, with a brightened countenance, delighted by the restored playfulness

of her father, "I would not see a single change on that face of yours for all the seas in the world; a rose is always there which can never be exchanged for one half so sweet."

"You are an unreasonable gypsy," retorted Mr. Everard, "never satisfied with those you love. You complain of pale looks, and yet now turn upon me that *trop de rose* is unbecoming. I can tell you, Ernest, that you will have no easy task to keep the balance of this lady's caprice *au juste milieu*."

Alice laughed, and shook her head archly at her father; but no more was said, as they had now reached Earlswood, and she left her companions to prepare for the tea hour. Ernest watched her, as she crossed the hall, with a fond, but melancholy expression; and then, deeply sighing, he followed Mr. Everard into the dining-room.

The latter stood by the window, apparently watching the setting sun; his thoughts, however, were far away from visible things. The playfulness with which he had sought to raise the drooping spirits of his dear child had been more than half assumed, although his own for awhile had been cheered by the result of his endeavour; but the effort no longer needed, he again looked grave, while many a perplexing thought occupied his mind. Ernest walked up to him, and, not perceiving his altered countenance, he asked, if indeed, he seriously




intended leaving home, and when he was likely to go.

Mr. Everard turned to the speaker, and replied, "Well, Ernest, my intention is certainly rather suddenly resolved; but I think it will most assuredly be accomplished, if it please God. Alice needs a change, and you a thorough relaxation; but I cannot quite so hastily decide the time of our departure, as there is, of course, much to arrange before I can leave my duties here; especially," he added, smiling, "as you, who might be my substitute, must go with me. In a few days, our bright-hearted Algy will return to us, and then we can talk over both the when, and the where, of our pilgrimage. I shall leave the choice of our destination wholly among yourselves, whether to the sea-coast or to the lakes; my sole object being the benefit of Alice, and to give you all a little recreation." He paused, and something like a tear glistened on his eyelids, when he added, "In you three dear children, Ernest, now centres all my earthly happiness; and I am thankful for the rich mercies thus still spared to me. It has pleased our heavenly Father to overshadow a home which, for years, never saw a cloud pass over its inner world; but, I hope, these visitations have chastened us to a deeper sense of our needing them; to a greater increase of faith, of holiness in heart, and to a more grateful appreciation of the many

mercies by which our afflictions—and they have not been light—were tempered. And now I would fain look forward to the time when fresh springs of happiness may arise within our narrowed sphere, and bring back to us all some rays of the sunshine which death, and its many sorrows, for awhile have darkened; yet, I trust, we are a chastened, but not a thankless family.”

Ernest could not but deeply feel this affectionate and touching expression of solicitude, from his almost more than father, and gratefully did he acknowledge it; and yet, a thousand conflicting feelings, stirred within his heart such a painful blending of joy and misery, as well nigh to overcome him; he sat down upon the sofa near him, and covering his face with his hand, he said no more. Mr. Everard saw, but scarcely comprehended, the conflict which evidently oppressed him; attributing much of it, however, to an overwrought mind, he asked no questions. “Come, Ernest, my son,” said he, affectionately, “shake off this University gloom, and look through the vista of a bright perspective, at the destiny which awaits on your opening life: a fair inheritance, the promise of early preferment, and a wife who is only far too good, for such a desponding, care-worn student.”

“Oh! Mr. Everard,” exclaimed Ernest, to whom every word had seemed like a coal of fire, “you



need not tell me of all the world's temptations. And Alice, that sweet angel! she is indeed too good for me! Would that she had never loved me!"

Mr. Everard heard not the last sentence, which scarcely rose above a murmur; or he would probably have probed yet deeper into the meaning of such apparent despair; but, although far from satisfied, he forbore further remark, and left the room.

Ernest, now alone, arose, holding his forehead with his open palm, as if to stay the beating of his temples, and then again sat down by the open window, that the cold air might relieve his oppressed heart. "Alice, my too dear Alice! she thinks me cold and estranged, and she droops like a blighted lily! And that good, excellent, pure hearted, though mistaken man—oh! how shall I bear to strike another blow at the root of his stricken happiness? And yet it must be done. My vow is registered in heaven; my sacrifice accepted; my life devoted; but it is, indeed, a 'baptism of tears;' a penance almost too bitter for human endurance.^h Such were his unuttered thoughts, and now he paced the room, too restless to bear the stillness of that evening hour. "What shall I do?" he asked himself; "shall I go with them, and make the trial a sevenfold fire? This could but touch my own heart, if I leave hers in its quiet security, and be to her once more all that my heart must inwardly for ever be, until it break under

the burden of such a cross! Yes, yet a little while she shall be happy, and for one brief month will I live in the sunshine of her sweet smile, listen to the music of her voice, and see health returning beneath the gladness of reviving hope. This will surely be a pious fraud, to prepare her for what will require the effort of recruited powers, and I can then leave her with new scenes around her, with a father's, and a brother's love, to plead forgetfulness of mine, and then—farewell to *all* the world!"

Thus worked up to a self-imposed martyrdom, Ernest felt more composed, believing that the surrender of every earthly hope, and earthly tie, would go far towards his salvation, as meriting reward, and blotting out transgressions. The servant, bringing in the tea things, roused him, and, starting up, he, too, left the room. Soon, again, the little party re-assembled. The conversation became general and cheerful, each one at first assuming what, perhaps, was scarcely felt; but Ernest, now exerting himself to amuse and please both Alice and her father, happier feelings were restored than had for some time been enjoyed. Alice and Ernest, sang together some long neglected duets, while the father listened with a delighted ear to sounds which seemed to bring back some long lost hope. Ernest, too, fully aware how much of this arose from his own efforts, felt his heart lightened by the very comfort he was bestow-

ing, until, unconsciously yielding to its influence, his spirits rose almost to the vivacity of his natural character. How fervently did the heart of Alice that evening respond to the aspirations of praise and thanksgiving, which concluded the family worship; and, when rising from her knees, she bade "good night" to Ernest, she looked up with a countenance so radiant with the peace of a pure and trusting heart, that again his own reproached him for the counterfeit on which she was reposing. "Dear Ernest," she said, "you have been so like yourself this evening, that I feel quite jealous of papa's influence, to effect that which *I* have failed to win. I must learn by what talisman he has brought back the bright smile I so much love to see." Ernest raised her hand to his lips, and blest her; and she left him for the night to dream of a happiness from which she thought all shadow had passed away. Poor Alice! little did she guess how fast the shadows were at that moment gathering round the horizon of her young life, within the heart of him in whom the sun of her earthly hope was centred!

In one short hour, the ravages of years seemed to have passed over the fine face of Ernest Willoughby. All within the house was now at rest; not a sound was heard to break the stillness of that midnight hour. He alone was up, grappling with feelings which he sought to coerce, by the strong, but un-

availing power of human resolution. A small gold crucifix was before him, which he had removed from his bosom, where it was generally worn, suspended by a chain of most delicate workmanship. Beside him lay an open volume, beautifully illuminated, called "The Rosary," a compilation of prayers and ejaculations, extracted chiefly from the devotional works of Roman Catholic Christians. Before these Ernest now knelt, renewing vows of obedience to a Church imposing restraints upon the soul, which formed no part whatever of the Divine code. He offered *himself* as a sacrifice to God, believing that the sacrifice of Christ was now insufficient, or rather not applicable, to save one who had forfeited the grace of pardon bestowed "once for all" in baptism; and this offering of himself was not in the surrendering of besetting sins, through a "contrite spirit;" not a devotedness of intellect to works meet for the "glory of God;" but it was rather a surrender of ties which Jehovah Himself had ordained and blest; a surrender of faith, of reason, of judgment, of everything partaking of a will independent of the will and authority of "*the Church*." It was in vain that Ernest struggled to silence the "still small voice" within him, which urged him to go to the "law and to the testimony," for that whatever was not according to that holy text, had not the light of truth within it. Again, and again, this

warning stood out, as it were, in letters of gold before his eyes, yet where "the Church," differed from his own conviction of the meaning implied, he was taught by the Tractarian teachers of the Church that it was pious to yield up such conviction to its authority. Prayer rose to his lips, as the outpouring of a crushed, yet earnest heart, but his tongue dared not give utterance to the rising petitions, which seemed to be perversely seeking guidance beyond the pale of ecclesiastical arbitration. So, while his soul wrestled for freedom before the "throne of Grace," he suffered no word of supplication to escape, save those which were lettered before him, in language not his own, that he might prove a meek and reliant obedience, to rules more holy than those of a soul really "thirsting after righteousness;" and he repeated, as prescribed in "The Rosary" before him, *ten times successively*, the same ejaculation, "Hail, most sweet Lord Jesus Christ, full of grace, with Thee is mercy."* But vain, indeed, were these repetitions. His soul needed help and consolation, but the words of his mouth, however holy, were foreign to his wants, and while he struggled against a sense of this mockery of prayer, his thoughts and feelings remained unsubdued, and seemed to him beyond the control of human efforts. A Bible rested on the table near him, but he did not open it, for in his state of mind

* Dr. Pusey's Letter to the Bishop of Oxford, 4th ed., p. 100.

he feared to meet some promise which he dared not trust—some hope which was not for him to cherish—some command opposed to that, which his vow to the Church precluded, wherever in *either* case his own interpretation of its scriptural meaning, diffused a shadow from that of the “ancient fathers,” or modern Tractarians. “Come unto Me,” saith the Lord, to *every sincere penitent*, “and I will give thee rest, my yoke is easy, and my burden light;” but the Church, according to Tractarian interpretation, heaps yoke upon yoke, burden upon burden, on the soul which has sinned after baptism, in fastings, and penances, and vigils, until the wearied spirit and outworn body sink beneath the rigours of such discipline; and yet, after all, “the result must be uncertain, until the judgment-day.” Oh! how different is the language of Him whose “name is holy,” who “spake as never man spake.” “Him that cometh unto Me I will in nowise cast out.” “I dwell with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit.” “Giving the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.” “Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more.” But Ernest Willoughby followed a “strange voice,” and heard not that of the Shepherd: and it was this perpetual struggle of counter-currents, between a heart really seeking the kingdom of heaven, yearning for pardon and remission of sins, and the superstitious bondage

which had enslaved conscience, and reason, and faith, that produced in his soul that whirlpool of contending passions, which made wreck of mind and body. Could this be he who was once so joyous, delighting in the happiness of others—so generously sympathising with the sorrow of the old and young, of rich and poor? his energies well attuned, by the harmonies of religious principles, restraining the moral, and elevating the mental life; his whole character both subdued and exalted by the grace of God; not, indeed, free from human imperfections and inward sins, needing daily repentance and pardon, and a strength not his own, to overcome, but free from all wilful dereliction of principle, or vice? The glow of health was on his cheek, and his countenance lighted up by the beauty of the “peace of God;” his spirits buoyant and bright, but never irreverent. Could it be the same, who now, exhausted by the wrestling we have described, sat leaning back against the chair, his burning brow resting on his cold hand; his face so pale, his figure bent, and thin almost to emaciation? Yes, there he sat before an open window, that the air of night might blow upon him, and refresh his faint and languid frame, ere he lay down to sleep and rest. And yet in character he was little changed. His temper, indeed, was now what it had never been before, irritable and unequal—his spirits either depressed or forced; but he was

neither less moral, less religious, less anxious to promote the good of others ; rather in all these, he sought greater perfection, and exercised a yet more stringent self-renunciation. But his religion was no longer based upon the Word of God. He had bound himself over to a servitude which fettered him, body, soul, and spirit. His body was enchained by a discipline which weakened its energies ; his soul by ordinances which darkened his understanding ; and his spirit by traditions as false as they were fatal ; so that its faith was no longer free, for it was entangled in the "yoke of bondage." The Bible had ceased to be his "lamp;" the light of the Gospel was screened and shrouded by man's inventions, and thus had Ernest become outwardly a slave, and inwardly a martyr, to a Church whose authority was of man and not of God. And while obedient to the very letter of its teaching, he was daily alienating himself from membership with the holy Catholic Church of God and His redeemed, by seeking to redeem his own soul by his own works, and so make Jesus, the Lord of Life, a secondary means of justification for life, and limiting the illimitable grace of the Holy Spirit, to the ordinance of a baptismal sacrament ! Well might such service be a service of fear, not love—of dread, not hope !

During the two first years of his Oxford career, little change was discernible in either the views or

the habits of Ernest Willoughby, beyond a slight leaning towards certain doctrines held more decidedly by some of its leading divines, with whom he had become personally acquainted, and who, appeared to him more holy in life and profession, than many others whom he had met, to a degree almost amounting to monastic devotedness. Subsequently, however, the change in himself became more apparent during his visits to Earlswood, until it had now become painfully evident that he had exchanged the simplicity of evangelical religion for the subtilities of a system not sanctioned by the Gospel, although neither Alice nor her father suspected how completely he had embraced the views of a school fast rising into a separate communion from the reformed Church of England, each day forging, as it were, a fresh link for the chain which must ultimately reunite it to Rome ; an admission in which Rome itself avowedly glories. There was, however, a secret influence, beyond all others, which had intralled the mind, we might almost say the heart, of Ernest Willoughby. About two years previously to the time of his present visit at Earlswood, Mr. Grey had returned to Oxford with his charge, then, for the first time, entered as a student of the University, but still wholly under the care and direction of his amiable tutor. The extreme delicacy of young Mowbray's health had induced a longer sojourn in Italy than

his parents had originally contemplated, and they had passed some months at Rome, where again, as we have seen, Lord Errisford and Lady Gertrude Austyn had been among their most intimate friends. Mr. Grey brought with him to Oxford a letter to Ernest, from the latter, especially introducing him as worthy of "esteem, admiration, and *example*," but with the singular request that her name should not be mentioned to the Everards, as connected with such an introduction. It was, perhaps, natural that thus associated with the remembrance of a mutual friend, no other inducement should be needed, at once to waive all formal etiquette between the strangers, and to cultivate an immediate intimacy; but apart from this, there was in Mr. Grey so much that was superior to the general class of society, a fascination of address, a meekness, blended with dignity, a refinement totally devoid of all affectation or conceit, together with a melancholy, evident though repressed, that at once rendered him an object of deepest interest to Ernest, and which every interview served but to strengthen; nor was this far short of a mutual sentiment, for Ernest himself soon became to Mr. Grey a tie such as might unite an elder to a younger brother, in whom existed perfect unison of mind, although less matured in its development and experience. The difference in age was, however, less of years than of character, and

Ernest soon fell wholly, under its attractive influence, and eventually became what we have seen him. To the vows of his ordination, which were sufficiently stringent, he had added those which were imposed upon him by a mistaken view of Christian responsibility. To all this he had but followed the example of Mr. Grey, who had urged upon him the blessedness of a soul, yielding itself to an austere surrender of every earthly tie, without which the priestly office could be but imperfectly fulfilled. From the Lady Gertrude, he had heard of his engagement to Alice Everard, and the more he saw of his deep attachment to her, the more he laboured to impress upon him the danger of such, and the incompatibility of marriage with the sacred ministrations of one sworn to the service of Christ, through obedience to holy Church, dwelling much and often, with all the enthusiasm of his own exaggerated views, upon the glorious achievements to which the awakened clergy of the Anglican branch aimed, in restoring her high privileges and sacred power, which had been so fatally lowered by the Reformation ; her sacraments desecrated, and her very priesthood brought down to the level of an unauthorised ministry ; nevertheless, the "gates of hell" could never prevail against her, if her sons would but be earnest in the great work of her restoration. He fully admitted the corruptions of the Romish Church, but not that they

had separated her from the true faith ; rather her condition, like that of the Church of England, called for increased exertions, on the part of every true-hearted Churchman, to bring both the one and the other, to the purity and union of apostolic Christianity ; union in discipline, in creeds, and, above all, in the holy sacraments, through which alone, we can absolve the souls committed to our charge, as the only legitimate successors of him, to whom the keys of Christ's Church, on earth were by Christ Himself intrusted. "Is this then," he asked, "a light responsibility? Dare we amalgamate secular or social interests with a mission so unspeakably holy? We who hold the awful and mysterious power of making the body and blood of Christ, remitting and retaining sins? No, Ernest, if we would ourselves be saved, we must take up the cross indeed, even to the crucifixion of all our dearest affections. But it is a glorious cross, and we may take comfort and encouragement in the blessed assurance, that if we suffer as martyrs here, we shall receive the martyr's crown hereafter."

His companion gazed upon the earnest countenance of the speaker, with feelings of reverence and admiration. He had listened and believed, and he went on his way to begin the work of his own martyrdom!

CHAPTER VIII.

“Vainly before the shrine he bends,
Who knows not the true pilgrims part,
The martyr's cell no safety lends,
To him who wants the martyr's heart.”

KEBLE.

ON the evening previously to the ordination of Ernest Willoughby, Mr. Grey, who had been to him, throughout his preparation, all that friend and brother could be, was exhorting and encouraging him for the holy office, to which he was about, so solemnly, to surrender himself. Ernest was greatly excited; his cheek was flushed, and his manner agitated, for his nervous system had been greatly weakened by fastings, to which he was scarcely equal, in preparation for the morrow's solemn rite, and now he wished to confess. He paced the room; and Mr. Grey, not inexperienced in the struggle going on within his bosom, deeply sympathised with him, in

what he well knew most keenly touched him ; but he dared not suffer any personal feeling to stand betwixt his conscience and his painful duty, so he silently awaited the communication of his friend. At length Ernest exclaimed, in a tone of irritation, "Cyril, you have never loved, or you could not urge me to a sacrifice involving consequences so fearful."

Mr. Grey looked up, and a sudden expression of such intense anguish passed over his countenance, that it at once drew the thoughts of Ernest from himself ; he stood before him in surprise, as if to read his inmost soul. But too well accustomed to control the emotions of a heart inured to severest discipline, Mr. Grey soon recovered his usual calm self-possession, save that for a moment he passed his hand across his forehead, as if to dispel some baneful phantom of the brain, and then he gently said, "Ernest, if you think that I have wantonly urged upon you more than the cause of our Church requires, or more than I would or could myself endure, you sorely wrong me ; and further, if I can strengthen you in holy resolutions, and save you from the peril of renouncing the cross of our Lord, by a knowledge of my own deep martyrdom, you shall hear the secret of my inmost heart, which I thought would lie there, unknown and unrevealed, till the grave should give up its dead !"

“Nay, Cyril, dear, generous friend,” interrupted Ernest, warmly, “shame would it be to doubt your noble spirit. Be still my guide, my spiritual monitor, bearing with my own ungoverned will, for in yourself you embody all that I could aim to be. Oh, Cyril! could I be spared one task, one sacrifice, which eminently touches the peace of another, scarcely less than it destroys me, I could resign all else without a sigh. No personal suffering, no toil, no duty, no ordeal that you could impose upon me, for my salvation, or for the Church’s good, would I hesitate to bear and to obey, only leave me my treasured Alice, to whom my heart is bound by every tie of honour and of love, and whose sweet influence would but give zest and energy, to every hallowed purpose of my soul.”

Mr. Grey seemed scarcely to heed this touching supplication. He was pale as marble; but, as if nothing could shake the stern resolve to which he had wrought his mind, he said, waving his hand to prevent any further remonstrance against it, “Ernest, my brother, I, too, will confess. Like your own, my life opened with promises of earthly happiness, which few, perhaps, can wholly realise. Young, thoughtless, and loving the things of the world, I came here to enter upon a vocation, which I had chosen, without a serious thought of its deep responsibilities, its high commission, or its awful results to my own

soul, as involving the souls of others, for everlasting salvation, or eternal misery ! I need not reiterate what you already know, of the blessed influence and example of one worthy to hold rule, my revered tutor and friend, under whose gentle teaching I learnt to estimate the charge I was about so lightly to undertake, and all that I have taught you, dear Ernest, I first received from him. He instructed me in the history of holy Church, from the time of its ancient glory to its present declension and peril, and her restoration soon became the absorbing interest of my soul, to which I vowed the dedication of my life, and the surrender of every thing which could militate against it. As a soldier goes to battle for the defence of all he holds most dear, so did I go to my ordination, sworn to count my life as nothing in comparison with the holy rights and doctrines of the Anglican Church, as she was before our unhappy Reformers despoiled her of those rights ; and at the feet of him from whom, at my consecration, I received the keys which can alone unlock the mysteries of salvation, and the power vested in our priesthood, through apostolic succession, to ‘open and shut the gates of heaven,’ I solemnly vowed to surrender myself—body, soul, and spirit—exclusively to this holy work ; and to renounce, if needs be, houses, and lands, and earthly *prospects*, to advance its interests, and to secure its

prosperity ; and, above all, I vowed, yes, Ernest, I vowed deeply, determinately, never to win woman's love, or seek an earthly bride !”

Mr. Grey paused, and the quivering of his lips, told that here lay the overthrow of his peace. He bowed his head for a moment, as if to escape from the passing phantoms of memory, and he resumed his history. “Triumphantly did I then begin my career, for I gloried in the cross, which I had resolved to bear. A most valuable curacy was offered me in one of the loveliest districts of my native land, but while rejoicing that the ‘lines had fallen to me in pleasant places,’ I received a summons from my dear, and respected tutor, announcing to me that a door of pious usefulness had already opened before me, in a mission of important service to the Church. I immediately came to Oxford, being then in the neighbourhood, and found that he had pledged my acceptance of a charge, which required me for a time to go abroad, with a family, of great wealth and influence, whose youngest son, a delicate lad of fifteen, needed change to a milder climate, and therefore a tutor was required to accompany him, that his classical studies might not be interrupted. This offer was so wholly repugnant to my inclination, that, upon the first impulse of the moment, I declined it ; but when I found how materially I might serve the Church by submission to the proposal, I dared no

longer refuse compliance. Sir Willis Mowbray, who had once favoured the evangelical party, had recently become more disposed to embrace apostolic views, in evidence of which he had applied for a tutor from the University of Oxford, one in orders, or ready for immediate ordination, that he might combine his tutorship with the higher and holier duties of domestic chaplain to the family, during their sojourn abroad, where, in Italy especially, the ministrations of a Protestant Church could not always be enjoyed. To many this offer would have been most advantageous, but to me, nothing could be much less congenial. Pecuniary emolument I did not want, and the restraints of such a position would, I know, be irksome in the extreme; but my spiritual adviser, pressed upon me the necessities and claims of our holy Church, and I felt bound by my vows to implicit obedience and self-renunciation. The erection of new churches were loudly called for throughout the world's Christendom, while many of those in England required repair and restoration. To these objects my salary, which is most liberal, was to be at once wholly devoted, my own resources being more than sufficient for my personal wants. I was assisted from my venerable friend, and if any assistance would at that moment have afforded me aid, it had been the unqualified approbation of the committee, and my submission, giving me

absolution for the weakness I had confessed, and his blessing ere I left him. And now I felt that I had, indeed, entered upon the work of martyrdom. Sometimes I have thought, Ernest, that *pride*, lay at the root of this submission : the pride of religious heroism, giving it the semblance of humility. But I know not. Of course, I was compelled immediately to decline the curacy, to which I had attached so much of hope, and sorely against the wishes of my widowed mother and family, I shortly left England, resigning my prospects of independence for those of servitude, and, in the world's estimation, my freedom for slavery. But, 'the servant must not be above his Lord.' I conquered every obstacle, and in the rich blessings of the Church, I looked for my reward here and hereafter. Of my young charge I need say nothing, for you know him. He was always most amiable and affectionate ; nor has he, in riper years, disappointed the expectations promised in his boyhood. The parents are worldly ; the mother ; often capricious and difficult to satisfy or please ; nevertheless, I have obtained some influence over the whole family, excepting, indeed, the eldest son, an officer in the army, who is a zealous adherent of the evangelical party, and very rarely with us ; but, I humbly trust, that I have gathered two lambs at least, into the fold of the true Church."

Mr. Grey again paused, and the mind of Ernest

suddenly reverting to many circumstances detailed to him of the Mowbray family, by Lady Gertrude, inadvertently asked, "Is not Miss Mowbray one of them?" but scarcely had the incautious words passed his lips, than he felt what he had probably done, and he now deeply reddened with vexation and self-reproach. To his surprise, however, Mr. Grey answered with perfect self-possession, almost amounting to indifference, "Yes, and a sweet gentle lamb she is, scarcely fitted for this rough world, but I trust she has devoted herself to a better." Ernest felt relieved, and smiled, although something like doubt still mingled with it. Mr. Grey, without perceiving it, continued, "For nearly four years, Italy has been the scene of our wanderings, and it was a few months after our first sojourn there, that we removed from Milan to another state, and there, Ernest, I was made to experience the full cost of the sacrifice to which my vows had for ever bound me. An angel crossed my path: day after day, week after week, every smile of her exquisite face, every tone of her musical voice, every grace of mind, and intellect, and of soul, entwined themselves around my very being; my heart was,—and *is*, wholly hers! Oh! Willoughby, you talk of love, and think I know not what it is! Never was love, in its most exalted state, concentrating in itself, esteem, admiration, reverence, homage,—more deeply, devotedly, holily

enshrined within the heart of man, than *here* it is!" He laid his hand upon his heart, but could say no more: then, covering his face, he bowed his head and wept. When he looked up again, the lightning's blast could scarcely have caused a greater blight, than the inward anguish of feeling had thrown over the countenance of Mr. Grey. Gradually, however, it passed away, leaving him only pale and haggard; but, seeing Ernest alarmed, he swallowed the wine which he had poured out for him, and became calm and composed.

"Dear Cyril," said Ernest, "if for my sake you have thus opened wounds which, I fear, are destroying you, say no more; but, surely, after what I have seen, you cannot urge me to vows, for which I have no strength, if this be their result."

"Ernest, beware how you misconstrue that result," replied Mr. Grey, solemnly. "What you have witnessed is but the weakness of a fallen nature, not the effect of a righteous vow. Lay not down the cross, because you see it is heavy to bear, but look at the cross on which your Lord, and my Lord, was content to suffer for His Church; and for that Church's sake, let us both be content to do His will."

"But, Cyril, *is* it His will?" asked Ernest, "that we should relinquish a holy link in the chain of

God's providential blessings, given to unite us to the very charities of life?"

"Christ died to sanctify the soul, my brother, and not to leave it free to foster its own selfish affections. They who are appointed to an apostle's work, must live and suffer an apostle's life. Would holy St. Paul have converted thousands to the Church of Christ, had he attached himself to things of time and sense? Think you, that *he* had never loved? Yet, was it not his own deliberate judgment, that the ministers of God did better not to marry, that they might 'serve the Lord without distraction, not caring for the things of the world;' and if *he* so vowed to relinquish the link, which binds us, rather to the snares, than to the charities of life, how far greater need have *we* to seek apostolic unction, through apostolic obedience, than *he* who was an apostle, through miraculous conversion?"

Ernest sighed, but answered nothing; and Mr. Grey returned again to the subject of his own resolve. "I have said how I loved, then what think you, must have been the task that my vows imposed, when again and again, I met the being whose life was as the life of my own existence, while on me reposed her innocent confidence, for guidance, instruction, and encouragement; my approval ever lighting up her sweet face with smiles, my influence

sufficiently powerful to remove prejudice and error? Yet, all this, I calmly braved for the cause of our holy Church; and this crucifixion I have endured for months."

"And was this love reciprocal?" inquired Ernest.

"No; from my inmost soul, do I believe, a thought of love betwixt herself and me, never rose within her bosom, else long ago, had we parted for ever! And now, Ernest, do you think that I ask you to drink a cup, whose bitterness I have not tasted to the dregs? Yet, never have I wished my vows repealed; or, if, sometimes, my heart has yearned for its release, my will, at least, has never consented to its wish. Never have I asked for woman's love,—never sought to win an earthly bride; but *she* shall be mine in Heaven!—to see her, dedicated heart and soul, to the Church on earth, set apart as a pure and holy daughter of *the* Church alone, I would go through all,—and more than all,—than I have already suffered!"

Ernest was silent, for his thoughts had wandered far. A vague and painful suspicion rose like a mist before his mind. He looked up, and fixing upon the countenance of his companion a searching look, he said, "And what is her name, Cyril?"

Mr. Grey reddened, but immediately replied, "Ernest, you have my secret, as none other, save my spiritual father, in confession, will ever hear or

know it. Be content, and urge no more, for what you ask shall never have reply. *That* is my secret still, known only to Him, whose eye no veil can shroud. And now," he faintly added, "no more of this. Forget what I have told you, save, when in your hours of weakness, you would resist a holy will; remember, that one still weaker than yourself, has found strength to overcome the tempter, and that what faith requires, faith can bear and do."

Ernest had been so wholly absorbed by the sad history of one, whom he esteemed above all other men, that his own sorrows had for a moment lain dormant; but now, again brought back to the full consciousness of what awaited him, he fell into painful and abstracted thoughts. After a long, uninterrupted pause in the conversation, he murmured, rather than said, "And is this, then, the end of all we have hoped for, lived for, waited for? Cyril, *must* I doom Alice to a fate so sad?"

"I have no *command* to give you that it must be so," replied Mr. Grey. "As far as clerical celibacy is a duty, it is grounded not on God's law, but on the Church's 'rule and on vow.' 'Our Church leaves this to the discretion of the clergy, although she has power, did she so choose,'* to enforce obedience here as in other matters. A vow once made at her sacred altar, can never be revoked; never-

* Tract 90.




theless, it is for you to count the cost of rejecting a pious vow, such as must bind you in closer unity with herself, and strengthen you to give up all, even your greatest treasure, that you may receive a hundredfold of 'treasure in Heaven;' but sure I am that if you sacrifice a holy vow, for the worship of the creature, better far draw back from the ministry, like the young man in the gospel, go away sorrowfully indeed. Fain would I save you from this, dear Ernest, you for whose holy surrender to the Church, I have prayed and fasted! Ponder well, I beseech you, the awful consequences of this drawing back from that, to which you have felt especially called. The Church must be supreme in the hearts of her sons, and will you—can you, desert her in the hour of her peril, and so lose the blessings of her mysterious power? Remember, that if you reject her now, she may reject you, when most you need her absolving mercy!"

Ernest answered only by a groan; and Mr. Grey followed up the advantage, which he saw was gained, by urging his very love for Alice, as a plea for the sacrifice he pressed, dwelling on the example of those saints and apostles who had given up life itself for a heavenly crown, and for the triumphs achieved through the tribulations of the righteous. Ernest, both excited and exhausted, listened intently to the arguments of Mr. Grey, as if the voice of inspiration

itself had spoken them, and he felt that his own salvation, and perhaps the salvation of Alice, depended upon his decision. His disordered mind saw not the subtle drops of a false and perverted faith, drawing him away from the pure and simple word of God; so he glanced only at the greatness of the work before him, of holding the keys of Heaven; retaining and absolving sins; above all, of winning *her* who was so fatally dear to him, from heresy to the obedience and blessed privileges of a Church, which alone was so empowered.

Poor Ernest! had he indeed sought guidance from the only source of inspiration, he had not listened to its counterfeit; but he believed a lie, and the "father of lies" rivetted the delusion. The Church, and not the Saviour, had been set up before him, as the object of his soul's devotion, and idolatry soon took the place of worship. He now fell on his knees before his friend and confessor, and there he solemnly vowed an unreserved surrender of himself to the Church, and to lay before its altar every affection of his heart—every power of his mind!

On the following day, Ernest Willoughby received ordination from the hands of his bishop. The great struggle was over, and but one trial more remained to be overcome. The evening of that eventful day, he passed again with Mr. Grey, who was anxious further to fortify and prepare his mind as far as pos-



sible, against the counter principles of the Earlswood family, aware that he would, there, have to contend with a powerful and adverse influence. He now received him with warmest welcome and congratulation, every trace of his recent emotion was effaced, and never had he appeared to Ernest, more cheerful than throughout that evening. His conversation became animated and varied, avoiding all painful allusions ; while with wonderful discernment, he led the mind of his companion, through arguments tending to confirm the claims of "the Church," without touching directly, upon any which could awaken distrust or apprehension. He led him on from history to science ; from science to Divine philosophy, with an eloquence and power of argument, and an adaptation of language to thought, that manifested not only a deep research into all the higher branches of literature, but also a surprising command of ideas, illustrative of his subjects. He dwelt especially on the history and character of the Jesuits, acknowledging most openly that in many respects they were models to which his own soul aspired, eschewing only the few errors which doubtless mingled with their religious creed. In all that related to discipline, to learning, and to self-abandonment for the truth's sake, he considered them examples worthy of imitation among the clerical members of our Anglican Church, recommending many of their devotional

writings to the study of every Christian disciple. Ernest was both fascinated and astonished. He more than ever estimated the value and privilege of friendship with a man, young indeed in years, but matured in judgment, and powerful in intellect, holding a master mind over every other ; while with the humility of an inferior, it might truly be said of him, that he became a "servant of all," that he might win souls to the Church he so devotedly served. Was this the man whom Ernest could for a moment doubt, oppose, or question? "No," thought he, "I might as well doubt a prophet, or question an apostle." And when he remembered, too, the scene of the preceding night, he wondered yet more, at the surpassing command of mind, which could so soon rise superior to the conflict which he had witnessed. Mr. Grey saw the effect of efforts exerted for the very object attained. He had conquered the wavering spirit of his young proselyte, and irrevocably sealed his vows. It was now nearly midnight, and Ernest prepared to depart, feeling a painful regret, that it might be long before he could again enjoy such an evening as had so fleetly passed away. Mr. Grey, before parting, led him to his study, and when he had closed the door, he took from his desk a small morocco case, in which lay a beautiful gold crucifix. "Willoughby," he said, "take this as my parting gift, and ever wear it next

your heart ; it will animate your faith, inspire you to prayer, and I trust, will often be to you a channel of support and consolation. Be faithful in your service of the cross, and you will obtain an imperishable crown. I wear its counterpart," he added, drawing from his bosom one of similar size, suspended by a chain, "and, attaching to it no light value, I thought I could scarcely offer you a holier memento of my deep regard."

Ernest received the gift with warmest expressions of gratitude and gratified acceptance. "And here," continued Mr. Grey, "is another offering, sent expressly from Rome, to remind you of one whose prayers have been with us to-day, in the solemn rite of your consecration. The Lady Gertrude Austyn requested that it might be given to you to-night, together with this letter, and thus I obey her wishes." This gift was a gold chain of exquisite workmanship, on the clasp of which, was a small enamelled Madonna and child. "From Lady Gertrude!" exclaimed Ernest, in unfeigned astonishment, and again a vague, and somewhat painful suspicion arose within his mind. He fixed a penetrating and earnest gaze upon the countenance before him, but nothing was there to warrant an apprehension. All was calm and dignified ; the smile expressed no more than its habitual melancholy, nothing to indicate emotion, save a slight tremor of the mouth, natural to the circumstances

which might produce this, in parting from one avowedly so dear to him.

The chain hung on the hand of Ernest, as he again looked up and said, "It is beautiful, indeed! but why did Lady Gertrude send it to you, and not direct to myself, or to ——" he was going to say "Alice," but he could not.

"I fancy that letter will explain her motives for sending it through such a channel," quietly replied Mr. Grey.

"Have you, then, been intimately known to Gertrude?" asked Ernest, still holding her letter unopened in his hand, observing that the chain suspended round the neck of Mr. Grey, exactly corresponded with that just given to himself.

"As the most intimate friend of Miss Mowbray," replied Mr. Grey, "I have met her frequently, and she has been pleased to express pleasure in occasionally receiving some instruction from me." Then, observing the scarcely repressed inquisitiveness of his companion, he added, faintly smiling, "This chain, which, as you see, resembles your own, was also her gift, although you need not be jealous, for I do not misunderstand it as more than a delicate return for what she calls 'obligation conferred,' having nothing about it, I am quite aware, of a talismanic nature, as is doubtless imparted to yours, as a *gage d'amitié*."

Ernest too smiled, and, involuntarily shaking his

head, he thought, "I am all wrong again, his idol is not *there*." He sat down by the lamp to read his letter, but as he did so, he reddened, and something like a displeased expression crossed his countenance. For a few moments he was silent, and then said, "Cyril, can you tell me why there has, of late, been so much of concealment about Lady Gertrude? I mean, more especially, where the Everards are concerned. She, who is naturally open as the day, is become mysterious and reserved. Why is she so anxious, that her own 'familiar friend' should know nothing of her correspondence with either yourself or me?"

Mr. Grey quietly answered, "I believe that Lady Gertrude acts in obedience to her spiritual advisers. No one knows better than yourself, Willoughby, that the Everard family hold such low and narrow views, that it is expedient, as far as possible, to prevent any interference on their part, with the religious feelings of our young convert, for so I may almost call her, and, therefore, reserve towards them is a pious submission to the authority of the Church; and allow me to add, Ernest, that it is important, you should encourage her in this reserve."

"But I cannot yet understand why all this is necessary," said Ernest, impatiently, and thrown a little off his guard, "if righteous in our own views, which I do not, of course, for a moment question, why may we not openly proclaim them?"

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"You will understand it better, my brother," replied Mr. Grey, "when you have a little further advanced in the knowledge and experience of an apostolic teacher; in the meantime, be directed by those that are so."

This last sentence was spoken somewhat in the tone of rebuke, and Ernest felt it so; but Mr. Grey had turned to the book case on the other side of the room, and taking down two small volumes, said, in his usual affectionate and familiar tone, "Here is a work which you must study deeply, for it is replete with golden rules. It is a treatise on the 'Disciplina Arcana,' or secret councils of the Fathers. And here is also a copy of devotional exercises, called 'The Rosary,' which may often stimulate your soul in seasons of lassitude and spiritual depression. Take both these volumes, and when not in holier use, let them remind you of an attached and absent friend. And now, dear Willoughby, we must part, for it is very late, and bear in mind this my last exhortation to you, in the words of a profound philosopher, 'I look upon the Church as the salvation of England, and I look upon the salvation of the Church to depend upon Oxford.'* Inscribe that upon your heart and remember your deep responsibilities, as a son of the University, ordained and consecrated to the Church, beneath the sacred walls of Oxford!

* Quoted by Rev. W. Sewell. A Sermon on the Nation, the Church, and the University of Oxford, p. 23.

On you, as on me, may depend the ' Church's salvation.' "

Ernest warmly grasped the hand of Mr. Grey, asked his blessing and his absolution, and the friends parted, uncertain where, and when, and how they might meet again.

They parted,—professedly in the fellowship and communion of the "*Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.*" And yet, in the long and familiar intercourse between the spiritual teacher and the consecrated student, rarely had reference been made to the Holy Scriptures, in which *alone* stands the foundation of all revealed truth, which that Church embodies—apart from the traditions and interpretation of uninspired writers. The "*Disciplina Arcana*" was a safer guide ; the "*Rosary*" a model of prayer and devotion ; the traditions of the ancient fathers, were purer streams of spiritual knowledge. So, like a lamp without its light, was their faith without the God of faith ; their cross, without "*Him crucified ;*" their Church, without its great High Priest ! This may sound a harsh solution of Tractarian theories, but their practical results are fully borne out by living proofs and melancholy experience. Look at their tracts, their devotional writings, their desecrated altars, their candles and crosses, their idolatrous genuflexions, all, all as utterly opposed to the spirit, and to the very language of Holy Scripture, as they

are dishonouring to Christ, and to the Holy Ghost ! We believe, and in sorrow we do so, that this is no exaggerated view of the system ; a branch broken off from the *Church of England*, and not now in reality a part of herself. But, alas, how many learned, and conscientious, and, humanly speaking, *religious* men, have been led on, step by step, from Tractarian errors to Rome's idolatries, drawing away many unstable souls in their wake to the same perilous position ; men, who when first yielding to the one, would have been, and *were* among the foremost to do battle against the other. But they departed from the simplicity and spirit of the Gospel, "teaching for doctrines, the commandments of men," and so making the "commandment of God of none effect by their traditions." With such warnings before us, let us "take heed lest we fall." Let every true-hearted member of our glorious Anglican Church,—a Church for whose sake its blessed Reformers counted their lives as nothing,—let us, like them, earnestly, prayerfully lay hold of the "*Word of God*," as the only foundation of a pure religion, and a purified Church. And while meekly appreciating all our precious means of grace, which that "Word" sanctions, let us seek more righteously to honour these means, by works meet for the "Glory of God," and for the holiness of Christ's redeemed Church, both on earth and in Heaven.

CHAPTER IX.

“ Her lot is on you—silent tears to weep,
And patient smiles to wear thro’ suffering’s hour,
And sunless riches from affections deep
To pour on broken reeds,—a wasted shower !
And to make idols, and to find them clay,
And to bewail that worship—therefore pray.”

HEMANS.

BRIGHT was the summer’s morn to Alice Everard, when, with a heart sunny as the aspect before her, she arose early, and throwing open her window, looked out upon the beautiful world. The lark was on the wing for its heavenward flight, its clear, sweet note thrilling merrily through the air, while every bird awoke to imitate its song, aspiring, like herself, to rise above earth’s narrow sphere. The heart of Alice was inspired too ; her thoughts plumed with the wings of hope, soared above this world of sense, and revelled in that of unseen glories, while at length her voice rose, with the music around her, in a morn-

ing hymn of praise. The air was slightly moved by wind coming gently from the south, with a freshness so welcome when the sun is high. Alice stood long to contemplate a scene, so much in unison with her own heart, and which, though familiar from infancy, seemed ever varying with the seasons, as they returned to bring their own peculiar changes over the natural beauties of creation. At length she sat down, and, opening the Bible, her mind soon rose above all sublunary things, to hold communion with the great Invisible. She turned to the book of Ezekiel, for some reference to the subject of her more immediate study, and her eye falling upon the 16th verse of the 1st chapter, it recalled to her a beautiful commentary of her father's, upon the vision of the four wheels. "Their appearance and their work was, as it were, a wheel in the middle of a wheel," and "their rings were full of eyes round about them four, and when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them." This now fully occupied her mind, as typical of the workings of earthly dispensations, within the great wheel of Providence: the eyes round about them illustrating the omniscience of Jehovah watching over the moral and spiritual machinery of a Christian's life, His omnipresence following them as a garment of light in "dark places," or as a shadow in the "day of heat." Wheel within wheel, *ever working* out the omnipotent will of Him, who is

“round about them all,” sending forth ministers of mercy, and love, and holiness, to interpret the meaning of the “inner wheels” of human events, to the faith which, waiting upon God, looks up with a “seeking eye,” and listens with a “hearing ear,” to lessons thus brought down from heaven, to direct and guide the soul through every trial, and every temptation, and every perplexity, which entwines one with another, as a mysterious network about the pathway of mortal life! Whatever dispensations may await me, thought Alice, oh! may my spirit go with the Spirit of God, whithersoever it may lead me, that so I may indeed, always behold His brightness, “as the appearance of a bow, that is in the cloud in the day of rain.” For how wonderfully is the *love of God* stamped upon every visitation of His providence!—a love, beginning the history of eternity with life received, and ending it with life redeemed. A love never wearied, never failing, never forgetting! While man’s disobedience worked death, God’s love provided the “new life in Christ,” that death might be “swallowed up in victory.” Man’s ingratitude now, as ever, turns the paradise of his being into a wilderness of sorrow; but God’s love is there to sanctify the sorrow, and make it a stream of blessings! Breathed upon by the love of God, poverty becomes riches—sickness, health—weakness, strength—penitence,

praise; fear becomes hope, and death itself becomes life! "Yes," said Alice to herself, "this is the substance of all Scripture, 'the Lamb slain,' for the sinner saved—saved through the righteousness of Christ, yet obedient unto works of righteousness, through faith, because faith itself, a holy seed, must reproduce the fruits of holiness, without which it is but a delusion; and faith works by love—loving much, as realizing the amount of sins forgiven! Surely, in all this, there is no keeping back the blessed doctrine of the atonement? The *work* of our redemption is, indeed, a mystery far beyond the limits of human intelligence, but its announcement to man is clear and simple, brought down to earth in language suited to the meanest capacity. The *mission* of Christ, who can compass it? but the *message* of Christ is neither veiled in darkness, nor enveloped in mystery; for the cloud of the law was swept off by the 'brightness of His coming,' and types faded away before the Saviour whom they typified. Faith now is but called upon to believe the word, and to obey it, for what the Lord declares that will He accomplish, and what He promises that will He assuredly perform. What then can poor human nature do towards its own redemption? Its native tendencies all set towards evil, and keep the soul down to seek even religion itself among the *grovelling* things which but 'perish with the using.'

Dear Ernest, would that he would simply lay hold of truth as thus revealed in the word of God, stripped of man's inventions, which have cast a dark cloud betwixt his soul and the peace of God. The Bible may be clasped with many seals, but prayer will ever open them one by one, as the eye of the believer's faith strengthens to admit the full light of revelation, while He who gave the faith, and formed the eye, knows best how to apply the light, without destroying the delicate vision which receives it ; and so will it be, until we may behold as 'face to face,' those spiritual mysteries, which are mysterious, because the imprisoned spirit can only see them, as 'through a glass darkly.' But Ernest has, I trust, now done with Oxford and Oxford teachers, and my precious father will direct his mind into the simpler, safer paths of the Gospel. Sea air, will brace his shattered nerves, and we shall be so happy. And the time may soon come when he can enter upon the more settled duties of his promised living, and then, oh ! how very happy we shall all be !"

The prayer-bell rang, and Alice, whose first visit down stairs was always to her father's study, knocked at his door, and found him ready to conduct the morning service in his family.

"You have had bright dreams, my child, I think," he said, as he pressed his lips to her forehead, thankful in his heart to see her look so well.

“I have, indeed, papa,” Alice replied, “at least, my waking dreams have been very sweet ones, full of my dear father’s tender kindness, and the bright waters of Aberystwith Bay.” She kissed him gratefully as she spoke, and both then walked on to the breakfast-room, where the household, together with Ernest Willoughby, awaited the good rector. After breakfast, Alice prepared for her walk to Glencombe, where she frequently passed her mornings, either in visiting the schools, the almshouses, or the sick, when any such required her care. Rarely of late had Ernest left the house during the early part of the day; or, if he did so, it was to wander alone among the least frequented paths; and, although Alice had often ventured half playfully to chide his preference for solitude, she had never expressed the pain which his strange misanthropy inflicted upon herself, attributing much of it to impaired health, and a morbid state of religious excitement. Her generous heart never doubted his good faith, and, notwithstanding his altered temper, and uncertain spirits, she did not, for an instant, suspect him of anything like altered affection towards herself, nor, indeed, had she really ground for such an apprehension, for there were times, when his love for her, appeared more than ever devoted. The slightest ailment or annoyance on her part, would ever call forth his most tender solicitude. Sometimes he

would take her hand, and look at her until tears filled his eyes, and then suddenly rush from the room for hours; and when she pressed him for explanation, he would simply assure her, that it arose from a conviction, that she had become his idol, and that he must learn to love her less devotedly, if he would serve God more faithfully. But now, he appeared to have regained a cheerfulness which delighted her unsuspecting heart, and when she found him awaiting her in the avenue, to propose their walking together to the village, she was both so surprised and pleased, that she felt as if some unaccountable weight had been removed almost by magic. Ernest knew and understood it, and although he too well knew how soon the tears of joy, which for a moment sparkled on her eyelids, would become tears of unmitigated sorrow, yet he could not now look upon the bright smiles thus awakened by woman's trustful love, without a responsive glow of proud and gratified affection. He took her hand upon his arm, and led her almost unconsciously to the wood, through which the walk to the village was considerably lengthened, Alice as unheedingly following his guidance, while slowly loitering onwards, as if to prolong moments of such pure, and to her, unmixed enjoyment. The sunny skies above them, and the cheerful rippling of the bright waters of the winding Lynn, lent aid to the perfect happiness of

that guileless girl, as she hung on the arm, and listened to the voice of him at her side, whose moods of joy and sorrow, were alike, and for ever, intermingled with her own. The day, the hour, and the scenery around them, awakened remembrance of those as bright, when three years before they had rambled together through the same wood, to the Waterfall, with Lady Gertrude and Algernon—a day memorable to Ernest, especially for happiness such as he had scarcely since so fully known, and which he now mournfully felt could never be enjoyed again. Nor was Alice wholly unconscious that a shade had passed over the hope of the past, although too much still gladdened the perspective, materially to darken the present; nevertheless, each concealed from the other these painful convictions, and both talked only of the “auld lang syne,” of their young existence, leaving the veil of the future close drawn betwixt that hour and the morrow, lest some intrusive thought should wander into the far beyond, and waken up the phantom fear which had, of late, too often haunted them. Thus, both now avoided all reference of themselves, save in the bygone of a happy childhood; and then they talked with mutual interest of Algernon, the dear, absent boy, now so nearly merging into the man, and on the eve of commencing a new era of life, at the University, as a student for the bar. Nor was the Lady Gertrude least in their

thoughts, although apparently the last remembered, for she had become a painful object of solicitude to Alice, and to Ernest, the subject was full of difficulty, under the circumstances of his pledged reserve, so that, rarely, had she, of late, been mentioned. Alice was quite aware that something like estrangement had gradually arisen to change their once happy and confiding intercourse, although she could scarcely define or trace its cause. She still, indeed, heard frequently from her, and the tone of her letters was scarcely less affectionate, but they were hurried and unsatisfactory, and rarely answered her own, where she most wished to have reply. Ernest, on the other hand, dared not touch upon events and influences so well known to himself, as actuating her conduct, and which might have explained much, of what, to Alice appeared inexplicable, while inwardly he wished that he could himself feel better satisfied with the course Lady Gertrude was pursuing towards the friend who so little merited either estrangement or reserve. Unable, however, to remove the impression of disappointment from the mind of his sweet Alice, he tried to banish the doubts, which sometimes forced themselves upon his own, believing them to be inimical to the deference which he owed to his spiritual superiors. He sighed as he thought of Mr. Grey, and the prohibition to which he had bound him in their parting interview; then,

changing the subject, from Gertrude and Rome, to other things, he carefully avoided allusion to any association which could possibly renew it. The walk now terminated, but so long had the lovers lingered on their way, unconscious of time and distance, which had appeared to both so brief, that Alice was surprised to see groups of her little scholars just dispersing with merry glee, for home and play. She chided herself for neglect of duty, and yet she scarcely regretted the surrender of time, which, she was fain to believe, had not been wholly wasted. She turned back, however, from the school, to take another path leading to the almshouses, whose aged inmates she knew expected her. This peaceful refuge of their toilworn and declining life, had been erected and endowed at the sole expense of her beloved mother, and now remained a precious memorial, claiming the peculiar care of Alice and her father, which never, if possible, was neglected—a memorial, oh! how far more acceptable in the sight of God, as well as to the hearts which mourned her, than the most costly painted window, or monument in church or cathedral could have been! Here Alice parted from Ernest, and comforted beyond expression, by the sweet confidential intercourse of the last few hours, so like a renewal of the yet happier past, that she felt as if her weak misgivings had been but a dream-like delusion, and, as she

thought this, such a glow of inward gratitude passed over her countenance, while looking up to Ernest, as if silently asking to be forgiven, that it gave a momentary beauty to her whole aspect, almost unearthly in its seraph-like expression. "You will call for me as you return, dearest Ernest," she said, affectionately; "if not here, you will find me with blind Annie."

Ernest held her hand long in his own, but how different were the feelings which, at that moment, filled his heart with mingled love, and admiration, and wretchedness! "Would that I could be ever at your side, my own sweet Alice," he replied; "I shall surely call for you, go where you may."

Alice, passed through the little gate of the almshouses, and disappeared at once, behind the screen of shrubs, which divided them from the road. Ernest stood for awhile, as if transfixed by some spectre, which he could neither baffle nor avoid. "Is she gone, in that prophetic gleam of angelic beauty, or am I mad?" he said, passing his hand across his brow. A faintness came over him, and he leaned for support against a bank, while drops of perspiration stood upon his face, and relieved the pressure which, for a moment, threatened to overthrow his very reason; but soon, partially recovering, he staggered to a spring near at hand, with whose crystal waters, "gushing sweet and clear," he bathed his aching

brow, and drank a full draught of its refreshing stream, which restored him again to consciousness and strength. He walked away through a lane leading to a small hamlet, called, 'Ivybrook, romantically situated on the brow of a hill, where he frequently visited the family of a small farmer, in whom he felt a peculiar interest, the wife being a daughter of his own nurse, and born upon his mother's property. She had recently been confined of her first child, and, naturally of a delicate constitution, was but slowly recovering. Ernest, too, had gained considerable influence over the religious feelings of both her husband and herself, which he felt it his duty to strengthen, in favour of his own views, whenever he could do so, as a spiritual teacher ; a duty in which he took great delight, and whether explaining to his willing listeners the creeds and catechisms of the Church ; or pressing upon them the vital importance of its sacraments, auricular confession, and penance, it was always in a spirit of such meek and affectionate persuasion, that he won largely upon the love and reverence of all who gathered round him at the Farm, although they often expressed a difficulty of comprehending some of his lessons, and thought it strange that the Bible was to be almost a sealed book, in their hands, as dangerous to their faith and morals, without the interpretation of the Church. To these pastoral ministrations, Mr. Everard had raised no

objection, for although he was aware how widely they now differed in some of the higher doctrines of Christianity, he had not the remotest idea how fully the system of Tractarian theology, developed itself in his ministrations. Alas! he had yet to learn that reserve in principle, reserve in practice, and reserve in truth itself, formed the very groundwork of Tractarian faith; a poison which was beginning to work its subtle way into the heart of that retired hamlet, spreading the offshoots of its baneful root, in reserve towards the venerable Rector, on the part of his parishioners—a people almost dear to him as his own children—so little, had Ernest confided to him his views, or hinted the purport of his aim, to win proselytes to the same mistaken principles. On the other hand, Mr. Everard, in his blind but generous confidence, had purposely avoided pressing upon Ernest the subject of difference between them, judiciously leaving the impressions of his Oxford tutelage to wear away unopposed, that he might gradually be again drawn to the pure Word of God, before he entered upon the more responsible duties of an incumbency. Perfectly deceived, however, in the real state of Ernest Willoughby's mind, he had scarcely allowed himself to feel that serious apprehension for the future, which would otherwise have been acutely suffered, for the sake both of Ernest himself and his affianced child. Nevertheless, he had so far

evinced a caution, wise as it was well judged, that their marriage should not take place as soon as was originally intended, unless more assured than he could as yet feel, of the settled character of the young curate, so far as his religious views were concerned, for on other grounds, he had no cause for fear or anxiety. Under such circumstances, he had strictly avoided all allusion to the event, taking it for granted, in the simplicity of his own heart's uprightness, that Ernest too abstained from pressing it, until his health were re-established, and preferment obtained. To Alice, on the contrary, this had been a source of surprise and pain. By the side of a dying mother, she had rendered a pledge to Ernest, which had bound her maiden heart to his destiny for ever ; a promise which was solemnly ratified and sealed by that loving mother's approbation and blessing ; and yet, she had now nearly attained her twenty-first year, and never since his ordination, had Ernest touched upon the subject of their marriage. But, as we have said before, she was of an unsuspicious and most trusting nature, which never for a moment questioned the integrity of him so trusted, and if there were moments when an anxious foreboding would, in spite of herself, arise within her heart, she would ever throw off the unwelcome doubt, as ungenerous and unjust. But all this was the secret of her inmost soul. Never, even to her father, had

she breathed in words what she often feared in heart, that the change in Ernest, too evident to both, arose less from bodily weakness, to which it was ostensibly attributed, than to malady of mind, under the delusions of a morbid and mistaken religion, although, even the penetration of a love deep as her own, had not fathomed the extent of his infatuation. Rarely had he spoken of Mr. Grey, and when he did so, in reply to any remark by which she sought to elicit something of his character, it was always with apparent pain or confusion, inexplicable to her straightforward mind; and yet, she was persuaded that *there* lay the influence which had drawn him from "sound doctrines," and from the "peace of God," through the same power of infatuation as had previously enslaved the judgment of her cousin Gertrude. This conviction was strengthened by the fact, that whenever Ernest received letters from Mr. Grey, they invariably produced increased depression of spirits, and more abstracted retirement from social life. She never saw those letters, and whenever she alluded to the correspondence, he impatiently evaded the subject until she ceased to importune him further. So, also, would she frequently endeavour to lead him to the Holy Scriptures, and bind him down to their testimony in religious discussions, but even here, he had become reserved, and generally changed the subject by some irritable remark of her low, Erastian

views ; that she was building her faith upon unhallowed ground, wresting the Scriptures to her destruction, closing his remonstrances by the charge that it was the evangelical party which was bringing her down to heretical views of the Church. At length, Alice abandoned all attempt at controversy, and it was her father's advice to press the matter no further in his present state of health and nerves, leaving it in a patient, prayerful spirit, to the control of a higher Power. All this to Alice, was a source of deep anxiety and concern ; nevertheless, hope ever wrestled for the ascendancy, and told her that it was a passing sorrow ; and when, during the last few days, she found how greatly he had regained his natural cheerfulness, she innocently believed that in her own overwrought anxiety, she had magnified the very facts which caused it : so now, she sat among her poor pensioners of the almshouse, dispensing comfort to some, encouragement to others, and pleasure to all, with a lightened heart and gladsome voice, her own soul elevated to a grateful sense of restored tranquillity.

Ernest, walked slowly and thoughtfully on his lonely way to Ivybrook ; his hand in his bosom, and his eyes cast down, as if to shut out the beautiful creation around him, so little in unison with himself. He felt that it was cruel, as it really was, thus to trifle with the happiness of one who was, and ever

must be, dearest to him ; to see her gather joy and trust, and bright thoughts of the future, from the wreath he wove, in semblance only of a hope, underneath which lay concealed the thorns, which were already entwined to crush that hope, and break the pure confiding heart which trusted him. "This shall not longer be," he said; "better at once to tell her all, and part for ever. She will not judge harshly of an act, laid as it were upon the altar of sacrifice, in atonement for the sins of a baptized soul, now steeped deeply in a 'baptism of tears.' She will pity and forgive a heart, which must rise above its own grief to become worthy of a high commission, and may not this very sacrifice be accepted and blest, even to the ingathering of her gentle pious spirit, from a 'rebel army,' to the sisterhood of a Church, in which alone she could find safety and salvation? I have vowed, and must I not perform? Yes; though it slay me, it shall be,—it must be done!"

How strangely do we often act in unison of *motive* one towards another, while distant as the poles, are the principles from which it springs, and the results to which it tends. Bound to each other by no common ties of interest and affection, Alice and Ernest, each praying for each, "hoping all things, enduring all things," in the unity of Christian love, their aim, professedly, for the same holy end, and yet how

widely different were they in the course pursued, to gain happiness and peace, in the best and highest sense! Why, then, if equally righteous in purpose, were they so distant in principles? And if the aim of each were holy, how could the result be in either case so essentially the reverse? Because the religion of one party was that of "Christ and His Gospel;" the religion of the other, that of the Church and its traditions. So the faith of the one anchored firmly on the "Rock of ages," against which nothing can prevail; the faith of the other was anchored upon a sandhill, and its hold was unstable. Alice had been taught to "prove all things" by the written word of God, and she walked in the light of revealed truth. Ernest was taught to believe only what his Church revealed, and he "stumbled upon the dark mountains." Alice obeyed the voice of the living God, and found her peace in believing; Ernest obeyed the voice of the Church, and found peace only in penance. Such was the wide difference between them—how could their pathway be the same?

Ernest had nearly gained the brow of the hill where stood the hamlet of Ivybrook, and was about to turn into a narrow lane, leading to Farmer Wilmot's cottage, when he saw Wilmot himself, hastening towards him from an opposite direction, and he therefore stopped until he had come up to him. "Oh, Mr. Ernest," he exclaimed, "I was just

wanting to see you, for my poor Mary is sadly cast down, and if any one can comfort her, I am sure, sir, you will do it. She has been wishing for you all the morning."

"I was now on my way to visit her," replied Ernest; "but what is the matter, I hope she is not worse?"

"Deed, sir, she is bad enough," replied Wilmot, looking himself cast down; "the little one is gone; went off like a breath of wind, in a fit, neighbour Martin says."

"What!" said Ernest, startled, "the infant dead, and not baptized? How very wrong is it, Wilmot, to delay that holy sacrament of salvation, even a single day, when a child is born sickly."

"Sickly!" exclaimed the farmer; "bless you, Mr. Willoughby, it was as fine a child as ever man was blest with. I knew it would vex you, but don't go and say anything about this to Mary, sir, she frets enough as it is; and I can't doubt the mercy of God to the little innocent."

Ernest shook his head, as he gravely replied,—
"We have no right to presume upon God's mercy, if we neglect God's channel of mercy; your child, Wilmot, was some weeks old, and ought to have been taken to church earlier, even supposing his mother was too ill to go with him herself. There has been great neglect."

“That’s true enough, indeed, Mr. Willoughby,” said Wilmot with a sigh, “and you understand these things better than we do, in course; but I shall be glad and thankful if you can speak a word of comfort to my poor wife, without talking about the baby, if you can help it.”

“Poor Mary!” said Ernest, kindly; “I will assuredly do all in my power to convey consolation and strength to her soul, Wilmot; you know I would do anything for either of you, that is not contrary to my sacred office.”

“I know you would, sir,” exclaimed Wilmot, warmly; “and Mary thinks you can just give a blessing to the poor babe, before it is laid in its little grave.”

They had now reached the cottage, and soon was Ernest sitting beside the bereaved mother, pouring into her ear every consolation in his power to bestow, of the blessedness of sanctified affliction and submission to the will of God, enjoining upon her the confession of her sins, that the Church might give her absolution. He avoided allusion to the child, and whenever the poor woman reverted to her loss, he tried to turn the current of her thoughts, more upon herself.

The dead child, lay like a figure of wax upon its small white bed, a sweet expression of innocence and *peace*, stamped upon the marble countenance as it

reposed in the calm sleep of death. At length, the mother could no longer resist the yearnings of her soul towards the child of her love ; rising suddenly, she removed the coverlid wholly from its form, and stooping down to kiss its cold cheek, she said, turning to Ernest, with an anxious expression, " Isn't my child, sir, just like a little angel in Heaven ?"

Ernest felt deeply touched, but, still evading her evident question, which he dared not answer, he replied, " It is indeed a fine infant, Mary, so suddenly to be snatched away ; and death ever comes as a solemn warning to the living, to be diligent in duty, not knowing the hour, in which we may be likewise summoned to render account for our works and words." He arose, and gently replacing the coverlid over the young corpse, he took the hand of its weeping mother, and led her back to the arm-chair, on which she had been reclining, for she was scarcely able to sit up. " Mary," he said, " I will read to you the prayers which the Church has mercifully provided for the maladies of body and of mind." He opened the Prayer-book, and, kneeling down by her side, he read part of the beautiful service for the Visitation of the Sick, with great earnestness and devotion. Again, rising from his knees, he sat down in silence, but observed a restless expression on the countenance of the invalid, who appeared little affected by what she had heard, as if her thoughts had wandered to other

things ; while she frequently turned to the bed of her dead child, on which her whole mind was concentrated. Ernest was perplexed, and laying his hand gently on hers, as it hung listlessly over the arm of the chair, he said, " Mary, this is not submission to God's will."

Mrs. Wilmot appeared either perfectly unconscious or heedless of his words, for she evidently felt nothing of the reproof they conveyed. At length, a deep flush overspreading her pallid face, she said, " Mr. Ernest, had it pleased God, I meant to have taken my baby to be christened next Sunday ; it would not then have been quite five weeks old, and I have been too weak to take it before." She paused, as if afraid to say more, but she fixed an anxious, beseeching look on the young clergyman.

Ernest, however, kept his eyes upon the ground, feeling all the difficulty of his position ; but finding that she waited reply, he said, " You should have sent for me, Mary, and I would willingly have come to you, at any hour of the day or night, to baptize your child ; but the opportunity is gone, let it be a lesson for the future."

" But, Mr. Ernest," she eagerly replied, " you have always yourself said, that a child must be christened in the church and not at home, so I waited till I was well enough to take him there."

" Assuredly," replied Ernest, " when it is possi-

ble; but where there is any indication of illness, baptism should not be delayed, upon any ground whatever."

"There was no illness in the case, Mr. Willoughby," answered Mary, impatiently. "My baby was well, and sleeping in my lap, an hour before it was a corpse. It seemed to shiver for a little while, and a dark look came over its pretty face, and then it died off like a lamb. But, Mr. Ernest, surely you can give it a blessing, for whether you had blest it living, or bless it dead, he would have had no more sense or thought of it, then than now."

"It would be impious, to bless a thing which has no life, Mary," said Ernest, gently.

"Can't you tell me outright, then," she exclaimed, greatly excited, "that God has taken my baby to His own blessed kingdom, because the Lord Jesus Christ died for him, and for me, and for you too, as to the matter of that?"

"We know nothing of these things, my poor Mary," answered Ernest sadly, and deeply pained; "we know not how the death of Christ influences the state of infants dying unbaptized,* and we must not presume on what God has not declared."

"If little Neddy Coleman was to die," said Mary, strangely laying hold of something which could bring conviction to her mind, "would you tell his mother

* Newman, on Popular Protestantism.

that you could not presume to say her boy was gone to heaven?"

"Little Coleman is a baptized child," replied Ernest, "and therefore has been made a 'member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.'"

"And is as wicked a child as ever walked the earth, for only six year old," exclaimed Mary, angrily; "there isn't a worse boy in the village, and yet you say that *he* would go to heaven."

"I should assuredly say," answered Ernest, patiently, "that in holy baptism he had received a full remission of his sins, 'both original and actual,'* and therefore if he died while yet scarcely a responsible subject, he would die justified in the righteousness of Christ, which was imparted to him in baptism, the only declared medium of salvation opened to mankind."

Mary Wilmot seemed neither to comprehend nor to heed this explanation. She again arose, and suddenly throwing off the counterpane with which Ernest had wholly covered the child, "Now look at my sweet babe, Mr. Willoughby, and don't tell me he isn't in heaven! Do you believe that God would cast away, into outer darkness, this innocent thing,

* "Baptism is a plenary and absolute remission of all sin whatever, original and actual, with which the baptized person is laden."—*Newman, on Popular Protestantism.*

that has never sinned a sin, and yet take a bad boy to Himself, just because *he* had lived to be baptized, and my poor infant, by His own blessed will, was called away before you, or any other parson, could get to him?"

"Mary, these are vain and useless questions," replied Ernest, gravely; "we can but speak what we know; we cannot promise what we have received no authority to do."

"Then you mean that my child can't be saved!" said Mary, now giving way. "Oh, Mr. Ernest, you who say that you have power to bind, and power to loose will you shut up your heart against this innocent child, and not loose him by one prayer! Only do this, and tell me he is free in heaven, and I will bless you in my heart, and gladly lay him down, with my own hands, into his little grave, without another tear!"

Ernest was greatly distressed, but he dared not shrink from his painful duty; he replied, mournfully, "I have no power to save, but through the sacraments of the Church, because no authority to do so, in any other way, and we do not, cannot know, the future state of unbaptized souls. Leave this question, then, in *hope*; humble yourself in confession, and take comfort in the absolution of your own sins, which the Church has full power to bestow. Come

Mary, sit down and compose yourself, and I will pray for you and bless you, before I go."

The poor woman was now unresistingly led to her chair. Her face became of an ashy paleness, her lips quivered, but she spoke not, and her eyes seemed fixed in vacancy. Ernest was alarmed, and hearing a woman's voice in the adjoining room, he opened the door, and called for a glass of water. It was the widow Martin, who had been both friend and nurse to the poor invalid, throughout her trial and distress. She now sprinkled water over her face, and tried to make her drink, which, however, Mary could not do. At length, a long, piercing shriek echoed through the dwelling, a shriek of despair, such as had never been heard in that cottage before! Another, and another quickly followed, and then the words, "my child, my child!" burst from the lips of the sufferer, as she fell back insensible, and apparently dead, in the arms of the widow. Ernest was greatly frightened; he bathed her face, rubbed her hands, and then assisted to lay her on the bed, trying all that kindness could devise to revive her. At length he saw, with a feeling of relief and thankfulness not to be expressed, a gleam of returning life, and then, at the suggestion of the widow Martin, he left her, that she might be undressed, while he hastened from the cottage to obtain medical assistance.

Alice Everard had passed from the almshouses to the cottage of blind Annie, a poor girl whom she frequently visited, to read to her, and teach her knitting. She had fulfilled her errand of kindness, and was standing at the door, thinking it long before Ernest returned, when she saw him walking very quickly towards the village doctor's house. She immediately followed him, to ask if any accident had happened. He looked so extremely pale and haggard, that, for a moment, her heart took alarm, for her father rose uppermost in her mind, but before she could ask the question, Ernest said, "Alice, my love, you had better go home without me; poor Mary Wilmot is very ill, and I shall go back with Mr. Graham to know what he thinks of her, and how we can best assist her."

"Ernest," said Alice, quickly, "you go home to my dear father, and I will go on at once to poor Mary. Tell Mr. Graham to follow me immediately, and, depend upon it, I shall see that she wants for nothing. What is the matter with her?"

"It is something of a fit, I believe," replied Ernest, still walking rapidly on. "She has lost her infant, whose death was sudden, and it has been too much for her; but I shall certainly return to the cottage, and would rather that you go home for the present; should we find her worse, you can be guided by Mr. Graham's advice."

The doctor's house was soon reached, and the bell rang. Alice looked anxiously at her companion, but would no longer oppose his wishes. "You look ill and tired, dear Ernest," she said, "but it shall be as you please now; I will go home and send the pony carriage for you, if you really insist on returning to Ivybrook."

The doctor was at home, just starting to go and visit another patient, but finding the case urgent, he consented to take Ivybrook first, on his way, and offered Ernest a place beside him, in his gig, which was thankfully accepted. Alice watched them out of sight, and then walked on to Earlswood, where she knew her father would be awaiting her for dinner, as it was already beyond the usual hour.

After dinner, Mr. Everard and Alice, strolled about the lawn, each telling the other of their morning's avocations, always interesting to both. Ernest Willoughby soon returned, with Mr. Graham, who gave a more hopeful account of Mary Wilmot than Alice had expected to hear. Nothing was said as to the cause of her attack; but as perfect quietness was important for her, Mr. Graham entreated Alice not to send any one to her that night. He apprehended no immediate danger, although he thought her seriously ill, labouring under strong nervous excitement, which he, nevertheless hoped, might yield to the remedies he had prescribed, if sleep could be

induced by the opiates he had administered. The kind-hearted man then took his leave, promising to visit the sufferer, the first thing on the following morning, when they should immediately be apprised of the result. Ernest was fatigued and depressed. Shortly after tea he retired to rest, but this excited no uneasiness in either Alice or her father, as he had taken more than his usual exercise that day, and had been, as they could well understand, a good deal affected by a scene of suffering and distress, although he had not mentioned the circumstances of his trying visit to the farm.

On the following morning, Mr. Everard entered the breakfast-room at Earlswood, later than was usual, having been detained in his study, by Farmer Wilmot, upon some urgent communication. Alice sat by the window, reading a letter just received, but hearing her father's step, she looked round, with a bright smile, exclaiming, "Papa, here is a letter for you, from my uncle Errisford, enclosed in one to me from Gertrude, announcing their arrival in London. I never was so surprised!"

"And yet, the movements of your uncle should never surprise you, my child, for they are always sudden and uncertain," replied Mr. Everard, gently, taking his letter from the table and sitting down for breakfast. At the same instant, Ernest Willoughby entered the room, still looking ill and unrefreshed,

He, too, held a packet in his hand, which, however, he placed, without remark, in his bosom. Alice had made the tea, and now sat down, saying, "How very *distract* and unsettled we all seem to be, this morning, as if, by common consent, we had determined to be late. Ernest, I have such good news to tell you! Gertrude is actually in London, and wishes us to join her there as soon as possible. She has written very hurriedly, and I was going to say, very unsatisfactorily, as she always does of late, giving me no intimation of their plans or purposes, beyond the simple fact of their being in England, and at Morley's Hotel. I speak in the plural number, for she only leaves me to take it for granted that the Earl is with her."

"The Lady Gertrude and Mrs. Seymour have returned to England with the Mowbrays, under whose charge your cousin will, I believe, remain, during her stay in London, Mrs. Seymour being already on her way to the north, summoned to visit an old friend, who is dangerously ill, and anxious to see her; at least," added Ernest, reddening, "so Mr. Grey informs me, who having resigned the care of his late charge, wishes me to meet him, at Morley's Hotel, if possible, to-morrow, or the next day, on some important business."

"And where, then, is my uncle?" asked Alice, *surprised*.

"*En route* to England, *via* the 'Mediterranean,' I believe," replied Ernest, "or soon will be. He is just now absorbed in the interest of the unhappy Greeks, in whose behalf he has granted loans, to a considerable extent, and I fear that his patrician monomania will, at last, plunge him into speculations, which may draw into the vortex of foreign ruin, his fine English inheritance."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Mr. Everard, "generous as the Earl is by nature, and often so, perhaps at the expense of his own personal interests, he is nevertheless too wise to involve the claims of justice for those of a precarious, if not altogether, a mistaken cause."

"Oh," said Alice, laughing, in reply to Ernest, "you little know my uncle, if you question his powers of arithmetic. He calculates cause and effect, no matter the subject, with such mathematical precision, that he is not likely to stumble at an angle, or to overlook a fraction. In all *worldly* problems, the earth holds not a more profound philosopher."

"Ay, Alice," said Ernest, "but even profound philosophy, sometimes, goes beyond its depth in still waters, though it may dive safely, a hundred fathoms below the surface of a foaming sea. However, I really have no right thus to judge Lord Errisford, of whose affairs I know nothing, but through the ambiguous channel of report, which speaks of his rais-

ing money upon mortgage on behalf of a cause not very likely to return him either interest or capital."

"What does my uncle say in his letter to you, papa?" asked Alice.

"Nothing more in substance, my love," replied Mr. Everard, "than what you have learnt from Gertrude herself; certainly, nothing of Greeks, or mortgage."

"But how is it that Gertrude has left her father alone in Italy?"

"Lady Gertrude, as you know, is a bad sailor," answered Ernest, "and therefore the Earl thought it better she should accompany the Mowbrays, overland, leaving him to follow more independently, his movements, as to time at least, being uncertain."

"I cannot imagine how it is," said Alice, slightly blushing, "but you always seem to know more of Gertrude and her plans, than I do. I shall begin to feel jealous, I think."

"Not of *me*, then, my Alice," answered Ernest, with a faint smile; "I know nothing of her, but through Mr. Grey; and of her plans, if she have any, I am ignorant as yourself."

"Then I shall begin to suspect Mr. Grey," said Alice, laughing; "there's treason in the camp somewhere, that's very certain; don't you think so, papa?"

Alice looked at her father, and now for the first

time perceived that he looked unusually serious, his countenance betraying some inward anxiety, evidently unconnected with the Earl's letter, which he had thrown down carelessly by his side, as if his mind were absorbed by some other subject of greater moment.

"Dearest father," said Alice, laying her hand affectionately on his arm, as it rested on the table, "something has, I fear, distressed you, or you are not well."

"Well, I am, my child," replied Mr. Everard, smiling fondly on her, "but I have had a painful interview with Farmer Wilmot, which has, in truth, greatly distressed me,—the more so, as something like self-reproach mingles with the sorrowful tidings he came to communicate."

"Surely his wife is not *dead*?" suddenly exclaimed Ernest, deeply flushing.

"No Ernest," replied Mr. Everard, gravely, "thank God she lives, and after a suffering night, during the greater part of which she was delirious, she is now more composed, and better than could have been expected. She seems very anxious to see me; and as Mr. Graham, thinks her case is one needing, rather the spiritual, than the medical physician, I purpose going to Ivybrook immediately after breakfast."

"Then we purpose the same thing," said Alice, "*and we can walk there together, dear father.*"

"Not this morning, my love," replied Mr. Everard; "in poor Mary's present state, one will be as many as she ought to see; a visit even from you, is prohibited until to-morrow, when, if with God's blessing, her mind can be relieved, she may be, we hope, considerably better in every respect. On my return," added he, addressing Ernest pointedly, "I shall be glad of an hour's conversation with you."

Ernest assented, but made no remark. Alice looked alternately at her companions, and saw that all was not right, but she forbore asking any questions; and after a pause, to break a silence, which she felt to be a painful one, she returned to the subject of Lady Gertrude's unexpected arrival. "Shall I write to her papa," she asked, "to propose her coming to us, instead of our going to London; at all events, until Lord Errisford arrives? This is her natural home, and we, I flatter myself, are more her 'familiar friends,' than the Mowbrays. Dear Gertrude! she and our own Algy once more with us, we shall be again a happy party!"

"Do so, my love," replied Mr. Everard, "and perhaps, she may be induced to accompany us to the sea-side; I think we may leave home next week, as Mr. Spencer has kindly offered to take my duty here."

"It seems almost ungrateful to Earlswood, to say *I shall be glad to go away*," said Alice; "yet so it is, for we all seem to need a change, and one, at

least of our present trio, will, I hope, return a different creature." She looked up archly, with her own sweet smile, and found Ernest looking intently on her, but no answering smile lighted up his saddened countenance. He sighed, and then abruptly left the room. Mr. Everard, without remark, soon followed, leaving Alice again anxious and perplexed.

CHAPTER X.

“ Bold Infidelity ! turn pale and die ;
Beneath this stone an infant’s ashes lie :
Say, is it lost, or saved ?
If death’s by sin, it sinned because it’s here ;
If Heav’n’s by works, in Heav’n it can’t appear.
Oh ! reason, how depraved !
Explore the sacred text, the knot’s untied,
It died, for Adam sinned ;—it lives, for Jesus died.”

THE Grange, as Wilmot’s farm was called, stood apart from the few cottages which formed the pretty Hamlet of Ivybrook. The fresh mown grass perfumed the quiet air, while many of the poor labourers were scattering the still green hay, beneath the rays of an unclouded sun. Young men and maidens sang merrily at their work, the world before them sunny as the day ; while older ones worked on more sturdily, wondering only when the toil of their life would cease. All around the dwelling itself was unusually still. Few sounds were heard beyond the

hum of busy bees, bringing to their hive rich stores of winter sweets ; and the bleating of young lambs gambolling by their mother's side. Scarcely a breath of wind moved the light foliage of a beautiful acacia, whose graceful branches hung as a screen before the cottage window, opening from a room, where, reposing on a bed, white as the driven snow, lay the pale form of Mary Wilmot, as she now calmly slept unconscious of the world around her. And yet at times, a flush, like summer's lightning, passed suddenly across her face, succeeded by an expression of such deep care, that it was evident, some painful dream disturbed the unslumbering soul which tenanted her feeble frame. By her side stood her faithful nurse, the widow Martin, supporting with unwearied patience, the pillow on which the sleeper's head reclined, fearful lest removing the arm which propped it, she might waken the sufferer from a sleep, on which reason itself perhaps depended. A small table stood near, against which Mr. Everard was kneeling ; his face buried in his upraised hands, while inwardly he prayed to be forgiven of God, if through neglect, or unwatchfulness, he had, however remotely, been the cause of the distress before him ; supplicating the grace of God, that he might speak "glad tidings" to the sufferer, in words of truth and consolation, according to His Holy will. Long had he thus knelt in prayer, when he arose and left the room, to await the waking

of the sleeper ; but scarcely had he done so, when Mary Wilmot, in an agitated voice, exclaimed, " Where is my husband ? Is he gone for Mr. Everard, who I'm sure would come to me, at once, if he did but know how very wretched, and how ill I am ? "

Mr. Everard heard nothing distinctly but his own name. He immediately returned, and going to the bedside of the invalid, he gently took her hand, saying kindly, " My poor Mary, how truly do I feel for you in your trouble ; and am grieved, indeed, to find you still so weak, but you must cheer up, for we all want to see you amongst us again. Look at the sun shining so brightly on you ; but there is a Sun, far brighter yet, whose beams fall with a healing power, on the sick in body, and the sorrowful in heart. "

She gazed upon his face, and smiled gratefully for a moment, and then said, " Oh ! Mr. Everard, how glad I am that you are come. You who know the Lord's word, better than I can do ; tell me, where is my child,—my dead baby ? Is *he* gone for ever to the black darkness of the wicked ? Will the sun *never* shine upon his dear face again ? "

" Your child, " replied Mr. Everard, earnestly, " is, I trust, where there is no need of the sun, Mary, to give him light ; for there, where he is risen, is no night ! The ' Lamb slain, ' is the light of the redeemed, the ' glory of God doth light their city. ' "

"But *my* child was not baptized!" said Mary, anxiously. "What could I do? He went off like a candle blown out by the wind, before I had strength to take him to Church; and Mr. Ernest always said that children shouldn't be baptized at home, unless they were like to die, so what could I do? for no look of death came near him, till it took him away outright. Mr. Ernest has told me, over and over again, that there is no promise of salvation apart from baptism. Oh! Mr. Everard, is there no hope, no help, for my poor baby, who had no sense to do right or wrong?"

"He was baptized by the blood of Christ, Mary," replied Mr. Everard, deeply affected, "when that blood was poured out upon the cross, for the 'sin of the whole world.' Do you believe that the Lord Jesus is *wholly*, as well as our *only* Saviour? That the great work of man's redemption was fully accomplished, when with His last expiring breath the Redeemer Himself said, 'It is finished!'"

"Oh! yes, sir," exclaimed Mary, earnestly, "indeed I do believe that, and if you can but make it clear to me, from His own blessed words, that my child can be saved, without the water of baptism, I will bless the lips that tell me so, and praise God all my life! I will never have another murmuring thought against His holy will, whatever He may see fit to lay upon me, for the just punishment of my

own sins, for well I know, they are bad, as bad can be!"

"I will try and make the subject plain to you," said Mr. Everard kindly, "if you can keep your mind fixed upon the word of God, as 'written for our learning,' by His holy Spirit; and from which alone, I desire to instruct and comfort you. But do you feel equal to hear me now? I fear it will fatigue you too much, in your present weak state. Shall I come again to-morrow, when you may be stronger?"

"Oh! no, no, sir!" eagerly exclaimed Mrs. Wilmot, raising herself on her elbow, "nothing can fatigue me like this weight upon my heart. I *am* better, and would rather hear you now."

"Then try to be composed," replied Mr. Everard, "and let us both remember, our blessed Lord's own most touching prayer to the Father, for His disciples: 'Sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth.' Be this *our* prayer, too, and let us trust to no man's opinion which is not grounded on God's word."

For a few moments Mr. Everard was silent, and Mary Wilmot, after a short pause, raised her clasped hands, fervently ejaculating, "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief!"

Mr. Everard sat down by the side of Mrs. Wilmot, and opening the Bible, slowly, read and explained from Genesis, the history of man's fall,

as the consequence of Adam's disobedience, and unbelief. Disobedience to God's command, not to eat of the "tree of knowledge;" want of faith in God's word, that if he did so eat, "he should surely die." He *did* eat, and from that moment the soul of Adam died unto holiness, and henceforth it became, spiritually "dead in trespasses and sins." The vital power of godliness, and all its sweet springs of holy peace and joy, were alike destroyed, and while the body retained only a vitality of corruption, disease, and suffering, brief in its mortal existence, the soul retained its immortality for a remorseful and terrible endurance! Thus, as St. Paul clearly stated it, "As by one man, sin entered the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." For as a corrupt tree, cannot bring forth "good seed," and seed, reproducing its own kind, can yield only evil fruit, so every one that is born of Adam, inherits the sinful nature of Adam, engendering still, only "a seed of evil doers," upon whom, as such, must ever rest the curse of sin, which is death of the body, and entire separation of the soul, from God and His kingdom. Mr. Everard, then turned to the announcement made, immediately after the fall, of the "Lamb slain before the foundation of the world," alluded to, as He, who should "bruise the serpent's head," that is to say, should destroy his work and power,—even

as the serpent (which is the devil) should bruise the heel, or the human nature of the Redeemer ; at the cost of whose spotless life, as a substitute, *perfectly holy in itself*, the lost soul could, consistently with the justice of Jehovah, be purchased and redeemed from the curse of sin. Then it was, that " God, so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to die, the just, for the unjust," that clothed in His own righteousness, Jesus Christ, might give back the soul of the sinner, to the Father, " without blemish and without spot," *not in itself righteous*, but because, in the sight of God, it stands holy in the *righteousness of Christ*,—washed for ever, and " made white " in the blood of *Christ crucified*. " Do you understand me so far ? " asked Mr. Everard.

" Yes, I do, sir," answered Mary Wilmot ; " but I thought, we could only receive that righteousness through baptism ? "

" As regards its application," replied Mr. Everard, " we receive it, individually, only through *faith*, for without faith, we are without Christ, and without Christ, we are still dead in trespasses and sins. But, if we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, then we have life in Christ, and our faith, as St. Paul said of Abraham's, is " counted to us as righteousness. " Nevertheless, while we are justified by faith alone, obedience to God, and holiness of life are its inse-

parable fruits, and by such fruits are we,—not *saved*, but *proved*. It was the absence of faith, which was the sin of our first parents, for had they believed, they had not died; their disobedience towards God was the fruit of their *unbelief of God's holy word*; and so, obedience unto God is the fruit of faith in God; for faith feeds on the 'Word of God;' reposes on it: fights with it."

"But how then, sir, can an infant be saved, who has no sense to believe?" asked Mary, timidly.

"Only as they who believe are saved," replied Mr. Everard, "by the free grace of God. It is true, as we have seen, that 'without faith it is impossible to please God,' and 'without holiness no man can see God.' But this faith, and works by faith, have reference to mankind only as *responsible* beings; for when faith is *impossible*, as in the case of infants dying before they have attained to this responsibility, the righteousness of Christ is equally imputed; the Holy Spirit imparting to their souls, by *reason of that imputation*, the 'new birth unto *life in Christ*;' and in virtue of which they are judged righteous; bought with a price, and clothed in the 'white robes' of redemption, as in a garment of light, the '*Lord is their Righteousness*,' and therefore He is their 'life and resurrection.' Thus, then, we cannot doubt that infants are saved by grace, without personal faith, or its fruits, of which they are in-

capable. An instance of this, especially encouraging in your case, I think, may be found in Deut. i. 39, where, in allusion to Canaan, which, as you know, was a type of the promised rest in the 'New Jerusalem,' Moses said, 'Moreover your little ones, which *ye said should be a prey*, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in hitherto, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.'"

"But, sir," said Mary Wilmot, looking meekly up, "Mr. Ernest told me, that only children who are baptized inherit the promises. He wouldn't say that a child could be saved without baptism, because the Church gave him no authority to say so, and he said it was not promised anywhere in the Bible."

"The Bible nowhere speaks of *infant* baptism at all," replied Mr. Everard. "But, Mary, you must try and fix your attention only on the *Word of God*," he added, laying his hand on the Bible before him. "Heed not even my words, if I speak not according to this holy testimony. Keep only these two things steadily before you. *Death* by the sin of Adam; *Life* by the death of Christ; and presently we shall speak of baptism. Let us see, 'what saith the Scriptures?' St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, declares, 'For as in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ *all* shall be made alive.'

thus expounded by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, 'that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' This death by sin, through Adam's transgression, became emphatically the inheritance of all his posterity, of course, including *infants*, we may, therefore, justly assume that infants *equally* inherit eternal life, as partaking of salvation, through the blood of Christ, *shed for them as sinners*, and still, as with adults, by reason *only* of Christ's righteousness. For surely infants who have not 'sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression,' that is, by wilfully disobeying the commands of God, cannot *less freely* receive the gift of salvation through Christ, than those, who have doubly incurred the penalty of death, by actual, as well as by imparted guilt. *Both* the responsible, and the irresponsible, must have perished eternally, through the sinful nature derived from Adam; and both will be eternally saved, by imputation of Christ's righteousness *alone*. Now, touching baptism, Mary, upon which I see your faith has made wreck, I will not say much to you. Baptism with water is, as our Church declares in one of her articles, a '*sign* of regeneration, or new birth, whereby, as an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly, are grafted into the Church, the promises of forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption

to be the sons of God, by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed.' Thus 'baptism is the *seal* of adoption, applied because we are the children of God, or charitably supposed to be so. For you will find throughout the Scriptures, that the soul must first receive its adoption, before that adoption can be *sealed*. Such is the declaration of Holy Scripture to adults. 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' So when the eunuch asked of Philip to be baptized, Philip answered, '*If* thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest;' and many similar passages of Scripture prove that *faith* in our Lord Jesus Christ is the ground of our salvation, which faith cometh, *not* by the external baptism of water, but by the Word of God. Philip had 'opened the Scriptures,' to the eunuch, and '*preached Jesus*;' the gospel of Christ became to the proselyte, 'the power of God unto salvation;' he *believed* the word, and baptism was the confession of his faith. Now, our Lord instituted the use of signs, not only to prove the faith of believers in the things signified, but as *seals* of His covenant grace, and we must not disobey a *Divine command*, by rejecting them, because enforced *only* as signs. It is true, that baptism with water, was in use among the Jews, long before the coming of our Lord, and therefore not, in one sense, strictly instituted by Him; yet He not only sanctioned it in His own per-

son, but declared that He did so to fulfil '*all righteousness,*' and, subsequently, by a positive command, directed that it should be administered to all who believed in His name ; and thus it behoves *us* to fulfil the righteousness of faith through obedience to His holy word, assured that in so doing—we shall have His blessing. Now, touching the baptism of *infants*, Mary, although there is no direct command in the Scriptures to baptize them, as in the case of circumcision, nevertheless, it is a solemn obligation upon Christian parents, so to dedicate their children to God, in the name of Him for whose service they heartily desire to train them, as well as to unite them in membership with the visible Church of Christ on earth, while claiming for their '*little ones,*' the prayers of that Church, and of the congregation of the faithful. For while, on the one hand, we must not unscripturally exalt the sacrament, by attaching to it an undue efficacy ; we cannot, I think, on the other, be justified either in disparaging or neglecting the rite of infant baptism, practised by the Church, from the earliest period of Christianity, in accordance with our Lord's holy injunction to His disciples, '*Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*' Should the infant survive, and attain to years of discernment, the baptism by which their adoption in the family of God was sealed, may

well be urged upon them, as a high motive of obedience and love to God, in fulfilment of those promises made for them at their baptism, in the charitable assurance that they would, indeed, become Christians in heart and faith, as well as in name. No less does it behove those, who enter upon so solemn an engagement, to continue earnest in prayer for them, using all diligence, both by example and precept, to train and to teach them for the kingdom of God, until old enough themselves to make confession of their faith, and to renew, in their own persons, the vows by which they had in infancy been admitted to baptism, that through the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, they may receive the 'inward and spiritual grace' of regeneration, of which the water, or laver of regeneration was 'the outward and visible sign.' But if, as in the case of your dear child, an infant dies unbaptized, we have abundant ground, in the Holy Scriptures, to feel assured of their salvation. In the eighteenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, we are told of Christ, that the people 'brought unto Him also *infants*, that He would touch them; but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for *of such is the kingdom of God.*' In another parallel passage, it is added that 'He took them in His arms and blessed them;' and this without the remotest

allusion either to baptism or to those who brought them, as the ground of His blessing. Another passage, perhaps, even yet more convincing of an infant's salvation, may be found in our Lord's address to His disciples, that 'unless ye be converted, and *become* as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.' How strikingly does this prove that Christ recognises infants as *His own*, and being such, are made meet for the kingdom of God. For even infants, as '*born in sin*,' the seed of a corrupt nature, could not be 'of the kingdom of heaven,' unless first *ransomed* by the Redeemer, and *clothed* in His *own righteousness*. Thus, then, may we believe, that if a little child, incapable of faith, or of discerning right from wrong, is cut down like a flower of the field, while yet but in the tender bud, *Christ is its surety with the Father*, and that washed in the precious 'blood of the Lamb,' it is numbered among the angelic hosts of the redeemed. Yes, Mary, the hands which were laid upon infants, in blessing and in love, were nailed to the cross for them, that they, too, might be partakers of His resurrection, and manifest His glory, and the glory of the Father, in their great salvation. Then fear not, but remember, that if, in the strength of a mother's love, you prayed for your child, even before you had beheld him, how much more powerful would be the intercessions of Jesus in its behalf, whose deep and


unspeakable love, we know, far surpasseth even woman's love towards her sucking child."

"Oh! yes, indeed, sir," exclaimed Mary, "the Lord is my witness, how often and often, have I prayed upon my bended knees, that my child might be a child of God, and that Jesus Christ would bless him."

"And these prayers, we may humbly believe, have been answered in a measure far beyond what you could have asked or desired," replied Mr. Everard, a tear glistening in his eye. "And now, my poor Mary, be comforted, and in firm reliance on the merits of your Saviour, rest assured that your child is numbered among the redeemed family of God."

It is impossible to describe the glow of unspeakable joy which now lighted up the pale features of the invalid. She clasped her hands together, and, looking intently on the face of Mr. Everard, as if to read his inmost soul, she exclaimed, "Then you do believe, that my babe is a little, happy angel in heaven?"

"I do, Mary," replied Mr. Everard, solemnly; "most fully, and truly do I believe in your child's salvation. Could I do otherwise, I should sin against the convictions of my own conscience, as doubting either the power or the will of Christ to redeem that infant soul; or, could I doubt it, because the waters of baptism had not been applied, which has never



been divinely commanded in the case of infants at all, my judgment would be misleading me, contrary to the whole tenor and *spirit* of the Scriptures on this point."

Mary Wilmot laid her head down upon the pillow and wept. She had shed no tears since the morning of Ernest Willoughby's fatal visit; but now they fell fast, like gentle rain upon the parched ground. Her pent-up grief, which had seemed to turn her very brain to adamant, now melted gradually away, before the bright beams of the "Sun of righteousness." "May the blessing of God, Mr. Everard, be on you and yours for ever, for the good work which you have done this day. I see it all now, plain before me. God forgive my wicked mistrust of His goodness and His love. I see it all. I left His holy word for the word of man, and gave up my Bible for books which had nothing of the Bible in them. Poor Mr. Ernest, may the Lord forgive both him and me!"

Mr. Everard arose, and kindly taking her hand, gave her a paper on which he had written down, all the passages of Scripture to which he had referred; bidding her keep it, and when equal to the exertion, to search out the texts for herself, with prayer that the Spirit of God might enlighten her mind to understand them more fully. "And now," he added, "may I not say, 'Peace be unto you?' The peace

of believing, even that 'peace of God which passeth all understanding.' Will you try, and put away fear from your heart, and be thankful for the 'glad tidings of great joy,' in the assured salvation of your child? Be thankful, even in your natural sorrow, that your heavenly Father, who sees 'face to face,' where we see only as 'through a glass darkly,' has taken your little one from unseen evils to come, which might have been worse than death to him and you. And although his name is not registered in the Church below, it is written in the 'Lamb's book of life,' in the Church above. We will now ask God's blessing on the words which we have spoken, and praise Him in the language of our beautiful Liturgy, 'for His unspeakable gift, in the redemption of the world, by our Lord Jesus Christ.' "

Mary Wilmot suddenly raised herself, and said, "Widow Martin, dear, go tell my husband to come here; he is sure not to be far away. Go tell him that I shall fret no more, for I feel as if I had found my child, that I thought was lost for ever."

The widow Martin left the room, and soon returned, followed by Farmer Wilmot, who had heard all that had passed from an adjoining chamber, where he had remained during the whole of Mr. Everard's visit, as if rooted to his wife's side, and yet not

daring to witness the doubtful result of their pastor's exhortations upon the sufferer's mind. He came to the bedside, and fondly stroked away a lock of hair which had fallen from beneath her cap upon her check. Tears glistened in his eyes, but he could not speak, his heart was too full for words.

"John, dear," she said, looking up into his face, "I am so happy now. Such a load seems taken from my heart. Forgive me, my husband, all the trouble that I have caused you, in my wilful wicked grief. But our child is in heaven, and we will not grudge him his blessedness there. I will try never to *wish* him back with us again, but will leave him thankfully with God, and say, 'God's will be done.' John, dear, kneel down by my side, and Mr. Everard will pray for us, and bless us."

It was a touching sight to see the strong passion of a mother's rebellious will and unbelief give way before the "light which is from above," resigned to the will of the Father which is in heaven.

Mr. Everard poured forth a short, but emphatic prayer. He then immediately took leave of the invalid, pressing upon her the necessity of perfect rest and quietness, after so much excitement and fatigue, promising to see her soon again. The grateful husband followed him, and when they had reached the outer gate of the cottage, which he went on to open, he turned to him, and said, "Mr. Everard, we have

not deserved this kindness from you, after slighting you as we have done, since we took so to Mr. Wilmoughby ; but I shall never forget it, sir, and may the Lord bless you a thousandfold."

"Say no more, Wilmot," replied Mr. Everard, kindly, "we have all learnt a lesson, which I trust will teach us to walk more humbly with God, and to be more watchful over our own hearts. Let me know how Mary is to-night, as I shall be anxious to hear, notwithstanding she has borne the fatigue of this morning so wonderfully well, far better, indeed, than I had at all expected. But the doctor was right ; it was her mind that was oppressed, and that, I trust, is effectually relieved."

"Ay, sir," replied Wilmot, "when the mind is troubled, the whole body is sick, and my Mary couldn't stand against it. But you have lightened her heart from a world of sorrow, and with the blessing of God, she will soon come round again."

"God grant it, indeed, Wilmot," said Mr. Everard ; "I shall see her again to-morrow, and Miss Alice, too, will be very anxious to come, but Mary must see no more friends to-day. Keep her very quiet, and she will probably sleep for some hours, her mind being now at ease."

"I will, sir, depend upon it, none of the neighbours shall come nigh her ; but she will be glad to see Miss Alice, let *her* come when she may, for she

is always welcome here, so is any of your name and kin, for a blessing is sure to follow you."

Mr. Everard passed through the gate, and walked slowly home, for his mind was unusually full of care and anxiety, not, however, unmingled with feelings of deep thankfulness.

CHAPTER XI.

"All shrines are Thine, where Jesu's love is spoken,
All altars Thine, where bread of life is broken."

"Oh! let no idols e'er defile,
The hallowed churches of our land;
Look down upon us with a smile,
When in Thy house, oh! Lord, we stand."

SACRED GEMS.

WHEN Mr. Everard left home, for his visit to the Grange, Alice sat down to write her reply to the invitation, received that morning, from the Lady Gertrude Austyn, entreating her to join them at Earlswood, instead of their meeting in "busy, bewildering London," where her father could not, at all events, accompany her, and she did not like to leave him alone, Ernest having been summoned to the great metropolis for a few days, and would gladly be her escort in returning. "Do then, dearest Gertrude," she wrote in conclusion, "do come to us, at least until your father's arrival; my heart yearns to see you again, and we have more right to monopolize

you than the Mowbrays can have. Earlswood, with all its associations and people, are yours by a sort of birthright, so tell the *foreigners* to let 'Charlie come back to his ain again;' and besides, you really are grown so full of dark sayings and mysterious doings, that I want a '*rità roce*' history of your past, present, and future." She took the letter, thus unsealed, down stairs, intending to add a postscript, stating the time of Ernest's probable return from London, of which he had said nothing definitely. She found him in the drawing-room, looking haggard, as he had often looked of late, and seemingly lost in thought. An open letter was in his hand, nor did he perceive the entrance of Alice, until she approached so near as to see that it was in Lady Gertrude's writing. This of itself would have excited no surprise, but on hearing Alice, Ernest started round in evident confusion, and hastily putting the letter in his bosom, he tried to appear undisturbed, while rising, he calmly said, "I thought you were out, dear Alice, is not this your school-day?"

"I was obliged to attend to other things, this morning," she replied. "I have just been writing to Gertrude, to press her coming here with you, on your return; when will that be, dear Ernest?"

"I fear, it is more than probable I may not return here for some time," he replied. "God, per-

haps, alone knows when." He took her hand, and kissed it ; but a melancholy smile, which met her glance, as she looked up, surprised, alarmed her.

"Is anything the matter?" she asked, anxiously.

"Nothing, dearest," he answered, struggling to speak calmly, "that *ought* to be considered painful, beyond the necessity of leaving you,—for awhile," he added, with some hesitation. "The Church may require me to go abroad, and indeed, Alice, I feel that I need a change ; my mind must have some powerful incitement to exertion and active occupation, or mentally and physically, I shall altogether sink." He again sat down, evidently agitated, and scarcely able to support himself. Alice still stood by his side, but without saying a word in reply ; she felt as if in a dream.

Ernest, retaining her hand in both his own, continued, "An appointment is now open to me, which, under all circumstances, may be the best course I can adopt for the present ; should I do so, it will take me for a time to Italy."

"*Italy !*" exclaimed Alice, withdrawing her hand, and looking painfully surprised ; "Is this a scheme of Gertrude's?—the subject of her letter to you, received, I believe, this morning?"

"The Lady Gertrude has very little to do with my movements," replied Ernest, evasively, and in a tone of pique. "It is my friend Grey, who, ever zealous

to promote my interests, urges my acceptance of a chaplaincy in a nobleman's family, purposing to remain on the continent for two years. They are now on their way to Rome, and should this be, indeed, decided for me, I must at once prepare myself for priest's orders, and follow them as early as possible. Poor Arthur Mowbray is compelled to leave Oxford, and give up all thoughts of the Bar, his cough, and other symptoms of incipient consumption, having returned; a report, to this effect, from his medical attendants, has brought his parents, suddenly, to England, being urged to remove him to a warmer climate, as the only chance of his recovery, together with perfect rest and change of scene. They will probably remain in London only a few weeks, and then remove to Nice, for the ensuing winter. Mr. Grey has, of course, now resigned the charge of young Mowbray, and will shortly proceed to Rome, on some important business of his own. Such, my Alice, is the substance of letters received this morning. Of my own movements, nothing is yet decided, as I wish to consult your father upon the subject, before I conclude my arrangements, although I have reason to believe that he will offer no opposition to my proposed absence, under all the circumstances which appear to render it desirable; and *you*, my noble-minded Alice, will, I am sure, judge leniently of actions, which are enforced by motives of highest

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and holiest duty, alas ! perhaps, repugnant to my will, as it is painful to my inmost heart."

Alice was thunderstruck, and far more deeply hurt than she now chose to betray : her heart felt as if a weight had fallen there, to crush, at last, even hope itself, for she saw that something very like deception had been practised towards her, and although, as we have said before, *jealousy* formed no part of her unsuspecting character, vague and painful misgivings crossed her mind, even while her love for Ernest rose above them all, and she still believed that he was more changed in himself, than estranged towards her. And yet he talked of Italy and absence, as if she were a thing forgotten,—she, who was to have been his bride so soon ! After some moments of embarrassed silence, she at length said, mournfully, " Oh ! Ernest, would, indeed, that you had ever, and would ever be guided by my dear father's advice, and principles, and judgment. I know nothing of Mr. Grey,—he may be all that you represent him ; but I do know this, that since your intimacy with him, you have never been well, nor happy, as once you were. Naturally noble and ingenuous, you have become reserved, mysterious, and incomprehensible ; I was going to say—*deceptive*, but that I know you to be self-deceived, and all this is the work of Mr. Grey. Let him go to Italy, or where he will ; but, oh ! dear Ernest, do

not be influenced by his own perverted views. Remain in England, faithful to the Church of England, as she is in her blessed freedom, from the fetters of Rome, and let no one persuade you to bring back within her sacred pale, the idolatrous corruptions of an unscriptural religion, which the Martyrs of the Reformation shed their blood to remove from England's Church. I know, and see that you are mentally ill, but, believe me, no change to Italy will restore to you the peace you once enjoyed."

"Peace, indeed!" murmured Ernest, as he sat, with averted face, leaning his arm on the back of his chair, his forehead pressed tightly with his hand. "Alice, there are many now enduring a living martyrdom, to *restore* the Church of England to life and vigour, rather than to revive the errors of Rome; ay, a martyrdom far worse than death to endure! But talk not of the Reformers, Alice; it was they who opened the door to schism and dissent, and we, who are true to the pure faith of our fathers, must suffer for their ruinous work. You know not Cyril Grey, or you would not speak disparagingly of one of our best, and most enlightened of our Christian teachers."

"I speak not disparagingly of him as a man," replied Alice, boldly, "but I do speak of his influence, as anything but a holy one, and of his teaching, as based upon those 'vain traditions' which

have ever led men from the word of God. Truth needs not the guise of reserve ; she knows nothing of those tortuous ways, said to sanctify means, by which her own purity is sacrificed, her fair face veiled with mystery and *deceptions* ; ways, into which, I am justified in saying, Mr. Cyril Grey would fain draw both yourself and poor Gertrude, while professing a righteous end. It was the usurping Papacy, and not the Reformers, that introduced schism and superstition into England, when England's Christianity was yet in her infancy."

"I think, Alice," replied Ernest, pettishly, "you forget that England was converted from downright heathenism, by St. Augustine, a christian prelate of the Roman hierarchy."

"It was no such thing, Ernest," said Alice, warmly. "St. Augustine, indeed, converted the Pagan Saxons, in the sixth century, while the infant church of the Britons, though persecuted and despoiled, still held existence, as it had done long before that of St. Augustine was thought of. There are strong grounds for believing that St. Paul himself, sounded the first trumpet note of the Gospel, upon the shores of our sea-girt island, when he preached the word of God 'even to the utmost bounds of the West.'"

"I thought," said Ernest, smiling, "that you never admitted the truth of any uninspired *traditions*."

“I admit, not only the truth, but the real value of every tradition,” retorted Alice, “which is *consistent* with God’s holy revelations, but never when it diverges from them, into man’s imaginings. I grant that we can but assume the probable introduction of Christianity by St. Paul; but, setting *this* aside, we may historically trace it, as far back as the first century, when Aristobulus,—who is mentioned in St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans,—was reported as being bishop here about that period; and this, you must allow, strengthens the probability, that St. Paul had previously planted a seed of the ‘true Vine,’ within the British soil. And in the second century, Lucius, a British king, who had, himself, embraced Christianity, was anxious to propagate it among his subjects. Your college student rarely knows much of English history, but it is a well attested fact, that he sent two emissaries to Rome, then in its apostolic purity, that they might confer with its bishop. They two were consecrated bishops by that prelate, and sent back to their king with a copy of the Old and New Testament, with a letter addressed to Lucius, which my dear mother made me commit to memory, and never has it been forgotten. It was nearly in these words: ‘You have received in the Kingdom of Britain, by God’s mercy, both the law and faith of Christ. You have both the Old and the New Testament. Out of the same, through

God's grace, by the advice of your realm, take a law, and by the same, through God's sufferance, rule you your kingdom of Britain, for in that kingdom *you are God's vicar.*'* Now, certainly, there is no assumption here, on the part of the Roman prelate, of any ascendancy or right over the Church thus planted in Britain, but rather, by-the-bye, a strong evidence that the earliest Christian fathers admitted the supremacy of a monarch, over ecclesiastical, as well as secular affairs."

"All this is mere assumption, upon uncertain data, and your inference thoroughly Erastian," said Ernest; "just those dangerous views, which now cramp the best energies of our glorious Church, and keep them fast bound within the miserable rule of State policy, usurping a power which it has no right to wield."

"Dear Ernest," exclaimed Alice, smiling, "not a word of usurpation in defending Rome. Whether such views are Erastian, I know not, for I believe this is a term of polity, not doctrine; but sure am I that they are very scriptural, and therefore sound and irrefragable. The language of Isaiah, concerning the Church of God, is, '*Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers. The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and*

* Quoted from an admirable sermon on "The Church of England and the Reformation," by the Rev. Hugh Stowell.

thy kings shall minister unto thee.' And did not the Lord signally bless the legislative administration of King Hezekiah? and many other instances may be found in the Old Testament, to prove that a blessing rests upon a nation, whose king or queen holds religious sway over the affairs of both Church and State; and sure am I, that our own day bears evidence of the same, strong as ever, for were it not for the royal supremacy over the ecclesiastical administration of our *own* Church, your new teachers would soon have it fast locked up again, by the Papal keys. But this is foreign to your slanderous charge, that Protestantism is a deserter from the primitive Church, whereas its name only is new, arising from its very office of cutting away the unwholesome fungi of Romish corruptions, which had overspread the hallowed root of Christianity, while Rome itself, gradually departing from apostolic simplicity, has, stone after stone, raised up the huge fabric of the Papacy, and is, truly, the great seceder from the pure religion of Christ."

"Alice, I fear you are fast falling into schism yourself," said Ernest, "already more than half a Dissenter."

"I dissent, *wholly*, from the Tractarian branch of the Anglican Church," replied Alice; "but never shall I, God preventing me, desert our Episcopal Establishment, because I sincerely believe, that a

national code of worship was divinely instituted, from the earliest period of the Christian economy ; and, although far from perfect or infallible, I know of no Church more scriptural in its creeds and its sacraments,—no form so pure as our own ; but, God forbid that I should exclude any sect, whose faith is founded on Jesus Christ, and His Holy Scriptures, from that true and only Catholic Church, which embraces *all* within her pale, who are *in Christ*, let the form of their religious worship differ as it may from our own.”

“Pray, Alice, do not talk of *separate Churches*,” said Ernest, impatiently ; “they are of *no Church*, who are not members of that which derives its authority and descent, through the laying on of hands, successively, from St. Peter, the only channel through which the sacraments can be duly administered, and the soul admitted into the Kingdom of God.”

“You cannot stand upon that ground for an instant,” said Alice, warmly ; “there is not a word in the whole Bible to warrant such an assumption. The great distinctive features of every Christian Church must be the same : love to God, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and obedience to the Holy Spirit. All who unite in these, through the reception of the Holy Scriptures, are members of the only Catholic Church. Nevertheless, I do not deny, that Episco-

pacy is of apostolic origin. We trace it from the apostles down to our own time, in the ordination of bishops, or elders, and presbyters,—not *priests*, mind me, Ernest,—with the laying on of hands, appointed to consecrate those ‘ambassadors for Christ,’ as men set apart to preach and to teach, preserving an order, a discipline, and a deference to constituted authorities, which prove the importance of a united national establishment, as an ordinance of God. To this, the earliest fathers of the Church bear witness. Clement and Irenæus, Cyprian and Tertullian, testify of Episcopacy ; and again, in later ages, it meets us, running through the Greek, the Russian, the Armenian, the Nestorian, and Waldensian Churches, and God forbid, that England should forget or deny it.”

“Well,” said Ernest, smiling, “that is granting something to us at last, Alice, and if you would but study the fathers a little more, and your Bible a little less, I should begin to have hope of you.”

“Not the ‘fathers’ of the dark ages,” replied Alice, “with their innovations and idolatries, which *you* receive as Gospel truth ; nor any other ‘father,’ of any age, who would bid me, virtually, close my Bible, and rest my faith upon the evidence of man’s interpretation. And, although I admit Episcopacy to be a scriptural ordinance, my Bible nowhere tells me that it is an essential doctrine, nor a matter connected with a saving faith. Many who are not members of

an Episcopal communion, have manifested, in holiness of life, the fruits of the Spirit to the glory of God; have passed from death unto life, with 'the love of God shed abroad in their hearts,' sealed by adoption and grace, into the family of the Redeemed, and baptized into one body, by 'one Spirit.' They who would exclude such from the privileges of the Catholic Church on earth, or deny them admittance into the Church above, know very little of the Spirit of the Gospel: while, on the other hand, many belong to the Episcopal communion, who, resting their faith upon the forms and ordinances of outward religion, remain, as regards the inward life, unsanctified and unchanged."

"Then, after all," said Ernest, "you avow yourself Dissenter at heart, and think Episcopacy a thing of no moment; every one, in fact, at liberty to worship as he pleases?"

"I have said nothing to warrant such a charge, you most perverse of all perverse men," replied Alice, smiling; "I have said that I admit Episcopacy to be a scriptural ordinance, and, therefore, not lightly to be disregarded, although I, for one, yearn to see it further restored to the simplicity and vital godliness in which the apostles left it. Neither would I derogate from its importance, or undervalue the privileges of our Anglican Church, which wants but the support of men, faithful to the principles of the Reformation,

to separate it more entirely from the shell of the Roman egg. Nothing, I think, short of Divine inspiration, can be more beautiful or expressive than the greater part of our Liturgy. Every sentence of our creeds can be tested by Scripture. Our articles seem to embody every essential doctrine of the Gospel. But even all these must necessarily be imperfect, because not divinely inspired; and if some errors remain, in the services of our public worship, which many could wish to see removed, they are but proofs of human fallibility, and not of secession from the 'good old paths;' and, when we bear in mind, that the Reformation was truth emerging from falsehood—light dispelling darkness, our only wonder may be that it retained so few of the shadows which the 'Sun of righteousness' will, I trust, soon yet further disperse; and yet, this blessed work you call 'a miserable division,' leaving our 'Church in bondage,' and her faithful members under a 'body of death!'"

"Ay, Alice," said Ernest, "and her children 'must be content to be in bondage, to work in chains' to submit to our imperfections as a punishment, and teach with the stammering lips of ambiguous formularies, and inconsistent precedents and principles, but partly developed.* This is what you call the 'blessed work' of the Reformers, who despoiled the

* Tract 90.

very sacraments of their mysterious unction, leaving them no more than signs, without life or power."

"Rather, did they leave the sacraments where Christ himself left them," retorted Alice, warmly, "as precious memorials of His undying love, and as tests to prove the inward vitality of the faith which is 'accounted to us as righteousness.' It is *your* party, Ernest, who would despoil them of their godliness, for you worship the sign, and set at nought the word of Him, in whom alone is embodied the life-giving Spirit which they typify. Once leave the simplicity of the Gospel, and see how quickly error multiplies, and idolatry takes the place of spiritual worship. This may be proved to any honest inquirer after truth, by the history of Rome, from the early dawn of her primitive Christianity, down through a stream of multiplied abuses, to the climax of her Papacy."

"And pray where was Protestantism in the days of primitive Christianity?" asked Ernest.

"The enemies of the Jews, on their return from captivity, might as wisely have asked the Jews, where was your church before Ezra? Their religion was in the Scriptures, although their Church was delivered by Ezra. So Protestantism was, and is in the Bible, where Popery and its offshoots never can be found, for had the Pope stood in the midst of the apostles, every one of them would have pro-

tested against his arrogant claims. The Anglican Church, like the Church of the Israelites, was in bondage through ages, well called dark, and Protestantism delivered it, by breaking off, link after link, of Rome's daring assumptions."

"Dearest Alice," said Ernest, "beware how you thus ignorantly traduce a religion and a Church against which nothing can prevail, and on whose foundation our own, I trust, will ever stand, in spite of every effort to overthrow it. How dangerous is this latitude of interpretation of Holy Writ through an uncurbed reason, despising the wholesome restraints of an ancient Church, and setting at nought her authorized councils."

"What did her authorized councils do at Nice and Trent?" asked Alice. "First came image worship, in defiance of all Scripture. And then, in 1076, they forged the link of papal infallibility, as an article of faith, bringing in divisions and disputes among the members of those very councils, in spite of their boasted 'unity!' an article, too, contrary to the whole of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Then came that idolatrous doctrine of transubstantiation, sealed as a matter of faith by the fourth Lateran Council, to which was naturally added the sacrifice of the mass, purgatory, and indulgences. Then came that iniquitous traffic of selling pardons, which the Lord Jehovah himself offers through His Son,

‘without money and without price.’ After this followed invocation of saints, and shutting up the Bible from the laity, and well they might do that, even in the face of Christ’s own admonition, ‘Search the Scriptures,’ addressed to every soul who would seek salvation—ay, to every *child*, for it was St. Paul’s strongest commendation of Timothy, that he had ‘known the Scriptures from a child ;’ and by whom taught? Not by popes, or priests, or councils, but by his own Christian mother and grandmother? And then, about the eleventh century, comes the prohibition against the marriage of the clergy, imposed by the Council of Trent, most happily for us, dear Ernest, as alien from the word and will of God, as all the rest. So much for infallible councils.”

Ernest had listened with rapt and wondering interest to the sweet voice of Alice, as she seemed to rise above herself, while pleading so earnestly in defence of truth, diverting him for a moment from more painful thoughts. But when she touched the very spring which opened the floodgate of his deepest sorrow, he started, and a sudden flush crossed his countenance, as he exclaimed, “Say no more, Alice! I dare not listen longer to strictures against that holy Church, to whose authority I have vowed implicit obedience.”

“Not to the *Romish* Church, surely,” replied Alice, “of which *alone* I was speaking, to prove the

madness of resting faith, upon the traditions of men in spiritual matters, apart from the teaching of the Word of God. But, blessed be His name, our Anglican Church, has not yet fallen back into the fearful tenets of the Papacy, and if not betrayed into them, by the treacherous subtlety of those who are bound to maintain her Protestant rights, and not subvert them, she never will."

"Say no more, I beseech you, Alice," exclaimed Ernest, as his countenance relapsed into that pained expression, which betrayed the inward struggle of his soul, against every conviction of mind which urged him to go once more, "to the law, and to the testimony."

Alice saw it, but mistaking the ground of his agitation, she arose, and leaning her hand affectionately upon his shoulder, she said, "Ernest, my beloved, throw off this morbid apprehension and doubt, which wrongs your better mind, and warps your reason into a slavish, blind obedience to the dictates of sophistry and delusion. Go not to Italy; disengage yourself, for a time at least, from the influence of Mr. Grey, until you can calmly and prayerfully test his religious views by the only standard of religious faith, the *Bible*! You *are* ill, but what has made you so? For what have you bartered health of mind and body, and the vigour of a glad and thankful spirit? All for a system of mis-

taken zeal,—sincere though I know it is,—which, nevertheless, finds no sanction from true apostolic example, nor in that holy Word which declares Christianity to be, in all her paths, a religion of ‘pleasantness and peace,’ and the effects of faith,—a living, obedient, grateful spirit, which, receiving ‘with meekness the engrafted word,’ finds grace to ‘rejoice even in tribulation,’ because ‘the Lord loveth whom He chasteneth.’ ”

“Could *you*, Alice,” asked Ernest, “rejoice in the heart’s martyrdom, although in a holy cause you voluntarily endured it?”

“No, Ernest; my natural heart would assuredly not rejoice to suffer; but my spirit, if sanctified by suffering, would, I firmly believe, rejoice in such an evidence of God’s love towards me, for I should feel sure that He who is ‘touched with the feeling of our infirmities,’ would so temper the fire of suffering, that it would refine, not destroy.”

“But tell me, my sweet Alice,” said Ernest, eagerly, “could you as calmly break away the dearest of earthly ties, if urged by the claims of a high and holy commission to renounce them?”

Alice looked up, for a moment startled, and a faint blush passed over her face, but she soon recovered herself, as if ashamed of even a momentary suspicion, saying, with an arch smile, “You mean to ask, *could I even give you up?* Oh! what a strange

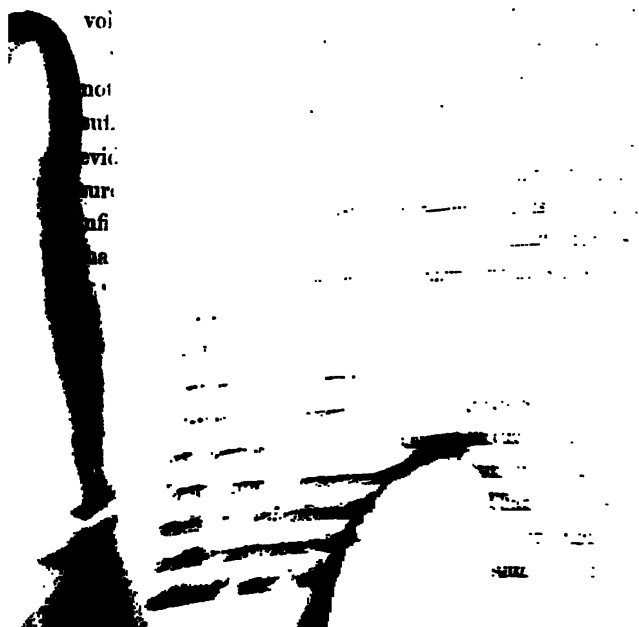
thing is the human heart ! It would serve you right if at once I answered, 'Yes, to be sure I could ;' but my mood is not a merry one, for you really have waked up so many phantoms of fire and fagot, as if all the dark paraphernalia of the Inquisition were before me ; so I will give you a serious reply, that if *convinced* such a surrender was required of me by the will of God, I would try and do so, with His help sustaining me, although my natural heart might break beneath the weight of such a human woe."

Ernest hid his face, and groaned, and for a few moments both were silent, while Alice wiped away the tears which trickled fast down her cheeks. Soon regaining self-possession, she said, in a tone of forced cheerfulness, "These, after all, are foolish questions, dearest Ernest ; foolish, for they are foreign to your case and mine, and they only make a tragedy, as you see, of feelings which they play with." She paused, but saw no smile upon the care-worn face before her, and then she added boldly, but with deep emotion, "The true believer ever finds strength given him from above, 'according to his day,' for we know in whom we trust, even in the Lord, whose holy Word has promised that 'He will stay His rough wind in the day of His east wind.' Oh ! Ernest, would that I could fathom the cause of your unconfessed misery, and share it with you if I could."

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patient endurance of suffering, while yielding even life to the enemies of God, rather than renounce their faith in the 'Lord that bought them,' for which they are content to die. Our blessed Redeemer himself, who with a full prescience of all it behoved Him to suffer, moved not a finger towards His own crucifixion. He platted no thorns for His crown; that was the work of His relentless persecutors, although without a word He wore the painful wreath upon His aching brow! This was the spirit of true and holy martyrdom, and the like has enabled many a saint to walk calmly to the fire, kindled for him by the despisers of his Lord; and many a feeble woman, to lay her head upon the block, without a murmuring reproach, for the sake of Him, whom her murderers denied! But pride wraps itself in horse-hair, and calls it a penance of humility; lies down upon an iron bed, and vaunts itself of patience; wears upon its breast a sharpened cross, and deems the festering wounds worthy of a martyr's crown; and pride casts away the very blessings given to be blest, and calls the surrender a sacrifice unto God! Such is the system of 'voluntary humility and will worship, and neglecting of the body,' which things, indeed, are said to have a 'show of wisdom,' but are all to 'perish with the using,' as dishonouring both to God and man."

Ernest had rested his head upon his h

Or, would that I could trace upon your saddened countenance, the hand of the Lord, laid there in love to chasten the spirit, which He would make meet to be His own; for then could I pray for you, in the blessed assurance that 'all things would work together for your good.' But, alas! I see you drooping, as I believe, under the self-inflicted rigours of a surreptitious martyrdom, which can have no end but to deceive you into a worse than vain belief, of working out your own salvation by works, which God has never commanded, by acts of needless self-surrender, which but enfeeble every power of intellect, and are as unfruitful in usefulness to others, as they are pernicious in their morbid effects upon your own soul. Else why, my beloved Ernest, are you thus so unhappy? You, on whom your heavenly Father has not yet laid one real sorrow—one serious privation to blend with the magnitude of no ordinary mercies, are stricken down with imaginary apprehensions, ungrateful to God, unjust to your Redeemer, and fatally injurious to your peace. There is nothing meritorious in martyrdom itself. The poor heathen idolaters of Juggernaut are more righteous in their dark sacrifice of life than they who in the name of Christ throw themselves down beneath the chariot wheels of self-inflicted persecutions. That only is a noble martyrdom which, meekly borne 'for righteousness' sake,' but strengthens the soul to the

patient endurance of suffering, while yielding even life to the enemies of God, rather than renounce their faith in the 'Lord that bought them,' for which they are content to die. Our blessed Redeemer himself, who with a full prescience of all it behoved Him to suffer, moved not a finger towards His own crucifixion. He platted no thorns for His crown; that was the work of His relentless persecutors, although without a word He wore the painful wreath upon His aching brow! This was the spirit of true and holy martyrdom, and the like has enabled many a saint to walk calmly to the fire, kindled for him by the despisers of his Lord; and many a feeble woman, to lay her head upon the block, without a murmuring reproach, for the sake of Him, whom her murderers denied! But pride wraps itself in horse-hair, and calls it a penance of humility; lies down upon an iron bed, and vaunts itself of patience; wears upon its breast a sharpened cross, and deems the festering wounds worthy of a martyr's crown; and pride casts away the very blessings given to be blest, and calls the surrender a sacrifice unto God! Such is the system of 'voluntary humility and will worship, and neglecting of the body,' which things, indeed, are said to have a 'show of wisdom,' but are all to 'perish with the using,' as dishonouring both to God and man."

Ernest had rested his head upon his hand, while

looking intently at Alice, as, with bold but gentle eloquence, she seemed inspired to breathe words of prophetic warning. And who can say she was not so? Little did she dream of the dark shadows drawing round her, from the very source she was denouncing to him, who saw them, felt them, and knew how soon she, too, must bend beneath the gathering storm! How galdly at that moment would he have laid down his life could he have saved her from its withering power. Admiration, and love, and pity, all rose as a host within his heart, to challenge, both reason and religion to the session of a holier judgment; but the voice of the arch-tempter sounded as a trumpet blast above all else, that the vow was registered, which bound him to *sacrifice himself* unreservedly to the Church to which he was consecrated, that by any penance, however severe, he might expiate sin after baptism. The terrors of the law were before him; he had forfeited his adoption; *obedience* to his spiritual father in the Church was now alone his refuge, and his hope! Ernest closed his eyes, but answered Alice only with a deep sigh. Once more she pleaded, as with woman's patient love, she said, "Dearest Ernest, time was, when I could scarcely breathe into your ear a wish, that was not gratified. No shadow had then, indeed, passed between us, to separate your hope from my hope, your faith from my faith; or

to change the sunshine of our sweet confidence into the gloom of reserve. I do not ask, who or what has wrought the change, but will you grant me one boon, which, on my knees, I would solemnly, entreatingly, ask of you to fulfil? It is that you will open your whole heart to my precious father; tell him all your difficulties, your doubts, your wishes, and, with God's blessing, he will guide, direct, and comfort you, and lead you with a father's hand, through all that seems to stand as a hedge, betwixt your soul and peace. Consult him in your plans, and trust him in your sorrows, if, indeed, unknown to me, you have any. Will you do this, my own dear Ernest, for *my sake*—for the sake of all we love? And then, if still unconvinced; if, after calm deliberation, you remain fixed in your resolve to go to Rome, and lay all that is essentially Protestant at her feet, I will urge you no more. I will pray for you, sorrow with you, love you faithfully through every change, and wait with patient hope until the Spirit of God shall enlighten your mind to see the errors of such a course, or until the blessing of God shall restore us to each other, and to happier times."

Alice could say no more, the last words died inaudibly upon her lips, as if their utterance had well nigh choked her. Ernest arose, and taking her hand in both his own, said, "Alice, you are an angel! would that I were, or could be, what you wish, or that we had never, never met!"

At that moment Mr. Everard appeared, walking slowly towards the house, on his return from the Grange, when Alice, anxious to avoid meeting him in her present agitated state, hastily left the room, and on reaching her own, she locked the door, then falling on her knees, beside her couch, she knelt down to pray, but, exhausted in mind and body, she burst into a violent flood of tears.

Ernest, too, sought refuge where no human eye could witness the tumult of his stricken heart. For some minutes he rapidly paced his room; one moment resolving to give up the ministry, and even religion itself, rather than break the vow of his affianced love; the next, trembling at the awful thought of such an alternative. At length his eye fell upon a letter which he had left upon his desk, and it seemed, at once, to recal him to a sense of his real position. "Oh, Cyril!" he said, in half uttered words, "if this be not of God, what a fearful weight of woe will rest upon you in the judgment-day! But no, I dare not doubt you. Your own devoted obedience to spiritual superiors, your meek endurance of trial and temptation, and total abnegation of self, prove the source of your authority to command and warn; to guide and to absolve. And shall I perish through the weakness of an unchastened heart, rejecting, perhaps, the only cross on which my will can be crucified, and by means of which Alice her-

self, through 'much tribulation' may be purified from the perils of schism, in which, however fair its guise, she must eternally be an outcast from the sacred and mysterious privileges of her baptism." He took up the letter before him. It was in reply to a touching appeal which Ernest had, once more, urged upon his spiritual adviser, against breaking an engagement, which, setting apart every consideration of his deep, devoted love to Alice, he believed himself bound by every moral obligation as a man of honour. The answer now lay open before him : it was brief, but emphatic.

"Moral obligations of moral honour, must give way, before religious obligations of Divine appointment. You must sacrifice the earthly, for the spiritual vow. By this vow of holy celibacy are you sealed, body and soul, to the Church and its priesthood. At your peril draw back ! 'The voice of holy Church is God's voice. Obedience to her, is obedience to God in its highest sense. Such obedience has safety within it, and more than safety. When we quit her guidance, we lose this security.'"

"Obey—suffer—triumph !

"CYRIL GREY."

"Feast of St. Barnabas,
183—."

* Oxford Tract 85.

Ernest Willoughby read; he dared not doubt. "I *will* obey," he said. "Down, down rebellious heart, it must be done! This very night we part for ever! No longer can I bear the unutterable weight of this fearful struggle and suspense. I will act the hypocrite no more; no longer shall my sweet Alice think me bowed down by morbid fancies or self-imposed inflictions. The cross is laid on me, and I must perish or endure it." Ay, Ernest, but by whom is it laid on you? Not by the hand of God,—not by the will of Christ. *His* cross falls lightly on the believer, for He has borne its weight upon Himself! *His* "yoke is easy," for its bonds are "bands of love." But, if we choose our own cross, or make one at man's bidding, its weight must gall, but never can it sanctify us.

The family party of Earlswood did not meet again until dinner was announced. Mr. Everard appeared to be unusually silent and fatigued. Alice was pale, but composed; and, as if fearful lest her father should detect her conscious depression, she forced herself into an assumed cheerfulness, but, in spite of every effort, tears frequently filled her eyes, for, although she firmly endeavoured to repress it, as still unworthy of her love for Ernest, nevertheless, something like a faint suspicion of the truth, had, like lightning flashes, crossed her mind, and left an impression, such as is sometimes mercifully permitted

to prepare the mind for more tangible adversity. And Ernest, too, acted a part, oh! how foreign to his inward feelings! From time to time he looked anxiously at Alice, speaking to her with peculiar tenderness, scarcely observing the coldness and restraint which evidently marked the conduct of Mr. Everard towards him, for so absorbed was he, in the deeper sorrow of that painful hour, he totally forgot the grounds of such reserve.

Thus, heavily passed the hour of dinner, and soon after the fruit had been placed upon the table, Alice, pleading a bad headache, which an aching heart had too truly given her, she left the room, to seek relief in a solitary walk to the wood.

Mr. Everard, now left alone with Ernest, after a few moments of embarrassed silence, abruptly turned to him and asked, if he seriously intended leaving Earlswood, on the following morning. Ernest answered affirmatively, and explained, what he had, in part, communicated to Alice, that an offer had been made to him of a chaplaincy abroad, and it was necessary he should go at once, to ascertain further particulars respecting such an engagement, than he could well do by correspondence, as, in case he should be tempted to accept it, no time must be lost in preparing himself for priest's orders; nevertheless, he was quite undecided, whether to do so, or altoge-

ther to decline employment in the Church, until more strengthened in health to undertake it.

Mr. Everard remained profoundly silent. For some time past, by a sort of instinctive and tacit consent, the name of Mr. Grey had been avoided between them ; so, Ernest now said not a word of the source whence the appointment had been offered, aware that it might involve discussions, which, at that moment, he felt he had no nerve to meet. On the other hand, Mr. Everard resolved, that as his advice was not directly asked, he would voluntarily offer none upon a subject so delicate ; nevertheless, he was not deceived, feeling perfectly convinced where lay the influence by which alone Ernest would be directed. At length, however, finding by the silence of his companion, that reply was expected from him, he said, with his usual gentleness, " I certainly consider, that on every ground, Ernest, the latter alternative would be a wise decision. Beyond this, I can be no competent judge, from my very limited knowledge of your views, and, I may add, of the ground on which your principles are based. You have been taught reserve, but little did I—*could* I suppose, that it would ever have induced an abuse of almost parental confidence and trust ; and that, too, touching the most sacred interests thus so unsuspectingly intrusted to you, by one who believed

you incapable of such utter dereliction of right principles ; ignorant, as I was, that you had so far embraced those fatally erroneous views, which base all that is inconsistent with honest dealing, upon the unscriptural assumption, that the end sanctifies dishonest means. You have taught me a lesson, painfully severe, but, thank God, it has come as a timely warning, never again to repose such trust, in matters connected with the spiritual charge committed to my keeping."

Ernest was startled ; to do him justice, he did not immediately recal the consequences of his spiritual interference at Ivybrook, so completely was his mind absorbed with the long dreaded separation from his idolized Alice, now so near at hand, while his naturally ingenious mind, recoiled from a charge so serious and unexpected. Deeply reddening, with something like indignation, he replied, " I know not, sir, how I have deserved so grave an imputation ;" but, scarcely had he uttered the words, than, remembering how soon this charge might too truly fall from the lips of his venerable guardian, he immediately refrained from any defence, which he knew could be so little understood, adding, mournfully, " Whatever I have done, or may do, to offend or distress you, Mr. Everard, my more than father, God is witness to the holiness of my motive, while none but *He* can estimate the cost, at which I sacrifice all that I most

love and value, in conscientious adherence to vows, by which I have most solemnly bound myself a servant of our Holy Mother Church. Her rights, which have been too long neglected, or denied by those most pledged to protect them, must be restored—if restored at all—through the zeal and fidelity of a persecuted and suffering priesthood ; or, whatever is catholic in the Church of England, must merge into Rome, or be sacrificed to the ambition of a secular power, or to the cold apathy of our Anglican hierarchy. Forgive me, Mr. Everard, that in your presence I presume to ask, if to save her from this—if to bring back her catholicity, we, her consecrated pastors and priests, can suffer too much, or serve her too faithfully, even though she must rise again upon the ashes of her martyred servants? And what are the ‘awful powers’ conferred on us, that we can dare lightly to hold them? ‘The power of communicating to man the Divine nature itself, of bringing down the Deity from Heaven ; of infusing the Spirit into the souls of miserable mortals—promises of the Church—proclaimed and administered by every minister of the Church, every time he stands at the font, or ministers at the altar.’ ”*

Mr. Everard gazed at the young clergyman, with astonishment and pity. “And is it thus,” he said, “your Tractarian teachers dare to put the Church,

* Professor Sewell, in his “Morals,” p. 27.

and the ministrations of her weak, fallible ministers, in place of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost? Ernest, I cannot further reproach you, for even now I am constrained to believe you sincere. But what a fearful delusion must that be, which, in the very guise of an 'angel of light,' can so beguile any rational being to the service of the 'father of lies!' The religion of Christ is a religion of truth, which holds no fellowship with the boasted catholicity of Rome, and fervently do I pray, as a minister of the Gospel,—and I humbly hope, not wholly an unfaithful one,—that, by the blessing and grace of God, the Anglican Church will ever remain out of her, and be separate. I will not now, too harshly, probe the canker of a false and fatal influence, which I see is taking deadly root within your soul, and which must, if not eradicated by a vigorous energy, destroy the vital powers of those healthful principles which have been mercifully implanted there, and for which you must hereafter render solemn account. Rather would I, with all the affectionate earnestness of a father, bound to you by no common ties, warn you, ere it be too late, against the desperate race in which, you are embarking both reason and religion, while running blindfold to the end awaiting you, in such a course of ruin. Return then, at once, my son, to the obedience which is to God, not man; and, on your knees, implore the Lord to remove the bandage of

delusion from your eyes, and so to manifest Himself to your soul, that you may see the 'truth as it is' revealed in Christ Jesus; may hear His voice, proclaiming the 'way of life,' and may believe neither church nor priest, 'teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.' Return to your *Bible*, Ernest, and well, indeed, with God's blessing, will it be, if you devote a few months, seriously to ponder its holy lessons of spiritual truth, that you may be better instructed for that sacred ministry, to which you have been so solemnly dedicated: a ministry,—not to limit the freeness of the Gospel,—but, 'rightly dividing the word,' to 'open the Scriptures and to preach Jesus:—a ministry, not to hold impious power over the mysteries of God, but, as a *stewardship* of His mysteries, to hold them in humble subjection to the *revealed interpretation of the Holy Spirit*! These interpretations, which, from the sad proofs I have this day had, of your spiritual teaching, I am bold to say, you have as yet studied but to little other purpose than to confound truth and error, shadow and substance, the assertions of God with the assumptions of man."

"I have taught according to my conscience," replied Ernest, "through the interpretation of holy men, on whose judgment I rely, rather than presume to rest upon my own, in matters of such deep import; men, whose piety and learning I cannot doubt,

retaining, as they do, the sacraments and creeds of the apostles, as preserved through their traditions from primitive Christianity, before the corruptions of Rome, and the heretical latitude of the Reformers, despoiled them of their mysterious unction."

"I rather fear me, Ernest," replied Mr. Everard, meekly, "that departing from the *real* mystery of godliness; 'God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself,' your novel—not primitive—interpreters and teachers, are fast falling into those corruptions, built upon the frail foundation of reconciling the soul unto God, by its own works, and purifying it by the fire of man's own kindling. These are the fruits of 'seducing spirits,' beguiling the unstable to seek in the elements of human learning 'that wisdom which is *only* from above;' and believe me, Ernest, that from the moment we reject the Bible, as the *sole depository* of revealed religion, and the channel of Christian faith, from that moment real schism enters the heart, germinating in heresies, a thousandfold more perilous than infidelity, because it bears upon its front the title of Christianity, and yet erects for its worship a form, without the power of Christ. It is through the Gospel—not the sacraments—we are sanctified, 'being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the word of God.*' Yes, Willoughby, in the 'Tree of Life,' planted on the morning of Creation, lay the seed of the Gospel!

and in the morning of the resurrection, when earth shall have passed away, we shall behold its fruits in the redemption of many, whose faith was '*born of the Spirit through the Word.*' And God grant that both you and I, as '*ambassadors of Christ,*' in the ministry of that holy Word, may ever so teach, that we may in truth declare, '*the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man, for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*'"

"And yet," said Ernest, "in that very Word we are told of many who are said to '*wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction;*' a serious warning, I think, against the dangers of private judgment in reading them."

"Never did the true believer so wrest them," replied Mr. Everard. "The warning applies to such, as would use them in the cause of a '*vain philosophy,*' or to justify a worldly aim, by widening the spiritual boundary of the Scriptures, to suit them to the limits of their worldliness. And some there are, who, wilfully refusing to look at the full face of revelation, see but the profile of the Lord, and so deny '*His oneness with the Father;*' or, who reading but one side of the page, on which the mercy of God is inscribed, believe not in His immutable justice, revealed to them on the other. And so with every grade of unsanctified learners; they search the Scrip-

tures only for materials to build up the Babel towers of their pride, but know nothing of that 'hungering after righteousness,' with which the meek are filled. But never did the child of God 'ask bread,' and 'receive a stone;' or seek for the 'pearl of price,' to find only its counterfeit."

Ernest Willoughby turned pale, but made no other answer than a deep-drawn sigh.

Mr. Everard, too, remained silent for a little while, and then said with evident emotion, "Ernest, I have yet much to say to you; especially touching subjects of vital importance, connected with your late ministrations among my poor parishioners of Ivybrook, which I permitted you to prosecute, as a wholesome exercise for yourself, in perfect ignorance of your having embraced, to any material extent, the principles and doctrines of the Tractarian writers. But, for the present, I am too much fatigued, both in body and in mind, to enter into any such discussions. You will, of course, return here for a few days, at all events; and should you decide against leaving England, you may still, as ever, consider Earlswood your home, where as a *lay visitor*, you will be gladly welcomed, and be at liberty to enjoy that repose and relaxation of mind, which, I think, is essentially necessary for you. We shall then have time, dispassionately, to inquire into the grounds of our differences, and fairly to test our respective views with

a hope, under God's help and blessing, of arriving at truthful conclusions ; nor can I doubt, that the cloud which has unhappily overshadowed your understanding, will be, again, dispersed by a patient, prayerful investigation, of the source whence it has gathered ; that truth may regain her hallowed influence, and restore to you her own sweet gifts of confidence, and peace, and spiritual joy. In the meantime, urgent shall be my prayers for you, that such, indeed, may be the result ; and I earnestly beseech you, also, meekly to ask the aid of the Holy Spirit, in this your 'controversy with God,' casting from you all those human dependencies, on which you have been, unhappily and blindly, led to throw the anchor of your soul ; until dragged through the quicksands of its unstable and treacherous hold, you have wrecked the faith which should have fixed more firmly upon the 'Rock of ages.' "

The better spirit of Ernest Willoughby seemed for a moment to prevail, as it whispered, "Almost thou persuadest me." But soon the subtle lessons of Mr. Grey, returned to neutralize the simple earnestness of his venerable antagonist. Mr. Everard marked the struggle, but urged no more ; indeed, he felt himself, quite unequal, longer to endure the mental exhaustion, which the painful and exciting events of that day had produced, and which began to tell upon *his physical strength*. He now, therefore, arose to

seek, in the quiet solitude of his study, the repose of mind which he so greatly needed ; but before leaving the room, he turned to Ernest, and holding out his hand, tears glistening in his eyes, he kindly said, with somewhat of a melancholy smile, " Now go, and seek a more persuasive monitor than an old theologian. Alice, will scold me for this monopoly of a last evening."

Ernest took the offered hand of the good pastor, and gratefully pressed it, but could not speak. How *could* he express feelings, however sincere, to which his actions must, so soon, appear to give denial ?

CHAPTER XII.

“She saw that in God’s righteous will,
She had been smitten, and she bent
Her knee at length, and e’en gave thanks
To Him, for that great chastisement.”

MARY HOWITT.

ERNEST WILLOUGHBY again left alone, after the interview with Mr. Everard, which closed our last chapter, remained for some moments standing motionless as a statue. He did then, from his inmost soul, pray that God might sustain and help him through the ordeal of his terrible conflict. But no answer was returned of peace. The conflict came not from God. His will had not dispensed the trial, and, therefore, Ernest was left to meet it in his own unaided strength. At length, the sight of Alice Everard roused him ; as, like some fair spirit, she crossed an opening of the wood, which lay in the distance before him ; at that moment, thrown out from

the perspective, by a gleam of golden light, which fell from the setting sun. He hastily left the room, and bounding down the terrace steps, he was soon walking once more by her side. The conversation between them was, for some time, constrained, and of a desultory character ; both anxious to avoid allusion to the very subjects, which, nevertheless, most occupied their minds. Alice was exceedingly depressed, yet Ernest felt too truly, that he could say nothing to raise her drooping spirits ; and although he had joined her, purposely, to open his whole heart before her, touching the painful necessity of their separation, the sight of her pale quiet face, which in spite of all her efforts to appear unmoved, betrayed such evident traces of mental suffering, that he had no courage, further, to aggravate the source of her distress ; but he rather sought to soothe her mind, by leading her thoughts to those heavenly aspirations in which they could entirely unite. And now, as hand in hand, they sat by the river's side, he dwelt feelingly upon the blessed uses of adversity, without allusion to their own ; and upon the unspeakable joy awaiting the true believer, when the painful pilgrimage of life, had reached the goal, where "mortality shall put on its immortality," and the soul emerge from its prison of clay, to rise where there can be no more parting, no more sin—"neither sorrow, nor crying, for God shall wipe all tears from

their eyes,” who “through much tribulation, have made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb.” “The hope that we, my Alice, may hereafter be reunited, in that holy fellowship of saints made perfect, must bear us up under the sorrows and separations, which meet us in ‘this vale of tears,’ although, at this moment, like the ‘sweet singer of Israel,’ I could now lie down and say, ‘Oh! that I had the wings of a dove, for then would I flee away and be at rest.’”

“I am not sure, dear Ernest,” replied Alice, “that in your sense of yearning for wings, the wish does not savour more of impatience to get rid of our day’s work, than of a spirit willing to wait our Master’s bidding, and cheerfully labour for the wages of His blessing; for, He tells us to ‘let patience have her perfect work,’ while wrestling for the prize, for which, we are commanded to fight. This has been *my* evening’s lesson upon the text of the ‘dove;’ but the theory of patience is easier than its practical exercise, and I find it hard to learn; even, while I would fain mount up on ‘eagle’s wings,’ for strength, to run up the steep hill which, perhaps, life may be to me, that, with God’s grace, I may not fall back upon my own weakness, from weariness.”

“We often quarrel about words I know, dearest,” answered Ernest, faintly smiling; “and sometimes, *perhaps*, about the means by which, we both aim to

attain the same end. But, if driven on the one hand, by patient suffering ; and on the other, lashed onward by persecutions and penances ; we at last, take refuge in the ark of our holy Catholic Church, on earth, it is sweet to believe, that we shall meet again, and for ever, among the saints of that Church in heaven."

"I, too, cling to *hope*," said Alice, earnestly, "but it is anchored, not on the church made with earthly hands, but on that 'chief corner stone' of the spiritual temple, unseen to human sight. To this, there is but *one way*, and it is my hope,—my prayer,—that you may yet find it; even, if you go to Rome."

"Let not that thought disturb you, dear Alice;" replied Ernest ; "go where I may, I take with me an Anglo-Catholic heart, which Rome can never apostatize; nor ultra-Protestantism alienate from the *only* true and apostolic Church, in which the soul may safely repose her faith and her salvation. Tomorrow, dearest, I must leave you, but let our mutual hope be, the sweet earnest of that unclouded happiness, which, in a little while, I do believe, will unite and bless us."

Alice looked up through her tears, for she misunderstood his meaning, which perhaps, he purposely expressed in doubtful phrase. He raised the hand, which had rested on his own, and kissed it, but said no more.

"You will really make me superstitious ;" said Alice ; "if you speak of a few days' parting with such foreboding sadness. You will, of course, come back to us again, before you leave England, if leave it you will. Have you spoken to my father?" she asked anxiously.

"I have, dear Alice, and he has planned all sorts of kind and hospitable arrangements, to keep me here, in this the Eden of my world." Ernest spoke this evasively, turning pale as death, while struggling to appear composed ; but in a few minutes he added, "It is impossible, at present, to calculate upon the result of circumstances, which lie beyond my own control ; but sure I am, that you would not ask me, to act contrary to the solemn dictates of conscience, however painful to us both, that result may be. Now let us walk on, dearest, for the dew is falling, and you will, I fear, be chilled."

Alice made no reply, and almost silently she returned to the house. The remainder of the day passed heavily with all, until the hour of evening prayer. Oh ! who can fathom the depths of the human heart, laid bare before its Maker ; whether brought to Him in penitence or perplexity—in sorrow, or thanksgiving ! We cannot tell the secrets of the soul's communion with the "Father of spirits ;" nor would we attempt it here. The words of *supplication* and confession, fell that night with peculiar

force and earnestness, from the lips of him who prayed, and silently, did each one feel their influence on themselves.

Again had the household dispersed, when Ernest Willoughby asked Mr. Everard, to grant him a few minutes' conversation before retiring for the night ; as he wished, not to disturb any one on the morrow, at the very early hour, at which, he must be ready for the mail, then the speediest mode of transit for travellers in that part of the country. To this request Mr. Everard raised no objection ; and bidding him join him in his study, he gave his usual blessing to Alice, and immediately left the room. Alice took up her candle to follow, telling Ernest that she, at least, would see him again on the morrow ; and therefore, would only say "farewell *au revoir* ;" but gently taking it from her, to replace it on the table, while retaining her hand, he urged her affectionately against this kind intention. His voice faltered, but exerting great self-command, he added, "You will please me in this, I know, my beloved Alice. Tomorrow, my heart will have to bear a cross, heavier than my own strength could support ; for I go away, feeling it very uncertain how long we may be parted ; and did I see that dear face before me, at the last hurried moment of my departure, it would only add a tenfold pang to the bitterness of leaving you, and, perhaps, overthrow my resolution to fulfil, what I

know to be an imperative, although most painful duty—*how* painful none but the Searcher of hearts can estimate !”

“ It must be as you like then, dear Ernest,” said Alice, submissively ; “ but why do you apprehend a doubt of your return, against which, there can be no just reason, unless you have deceived me ?”

Ernest hesitated, for he knew not what to answer. He dared not witness the effect of that blow to her happiness, which it was his dreadful duty to inflict ; and yet, it seemed cruel further to mislead her. At length, he replied, evasively, “ We little know, my precious Alice, when parting from those we love, whether life may be spared to meet again ; and it is this impenetrable veil, of, even one to-morrow, which makes such separation, a dark vacuum, which is so oppressive to those, who must pass through it.”

“ Not if a pious, trustful hope be its handmaid, to fill that vacuum with her own sweet light,” replied Alice. “ Despair is the fretful child of gloomy superstition, and it is ill done of you, Ernest, to give it your adoption ; but I shall strangle it yet, depend upon it.”

Ernest appeared scarcely to hear her words ; or to heed the smile which faintly followed them. He looked at her sadly for a moment, and then said, “ Alice, whatever sorrow I have caused you, or may

yet be the unwilling means of inflicting, will you promise to forgive, and think kindly of me, as you can ; never, never doubting, my undying and devoted love ? ”

Alice could only press his hand, in token of her forgiveness, at least, but she could not speak ; her tears were gathering fast, and she turned away her head to hide them ; but Ernest gently drew it against his shoulder, and they wept together ! Soon, however, Alice regained her self-possession, and said in a low, but resolute voice, “ Now, Ernest, let us part ; I see you *have* deceived me ; you embark at once for Italy ! Go, and if indeed we never meet again, remember that with her latest breath of life, Alice will pray for you, and bless you ! Farewell, Ernest, may the Lord yet guide you to Himself and peace ! ” She disengaged her hand, from that which firmly grasped it, and the next moment she was gone.

Ernest, for awhile stood spell-bound, as if rooted there by some frightful phantasy. He heard the light receding footsteps of Alice, as she passed swiftly upwards to her room. He heard her door close behind her ; then, all was silent as the grave ! Cold drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead ; but gradually, the tension of his brain relaxed, his breathing became more free ; and his mind nerved itself to endure, the last remaining trial of his self-

immolation—confession to the father, of his vow against the daughter's peace!

But the great sacrifice was made, the deadliest blow had been endured. The idolatry of his heart had been laid upon the altar of his mother Church, in penance of his sins against her; and henceforth, she was bound to give him safety and salvation. His cheek was flushed; its crimson spot of fever, told how ill the physical, could bear the mental torture. His eye was bright and clear; but, there was an unnatural calmness in his movements, which amid the tempest of mortal suffering, is more painful to look upon, than the violence of impassioned grief, which exhausts the very fire it has kindled; for it is like the calmness of a foundered ship, which settles before it sinks for ever. Ernest Willoughby took up his lamp, and walked, at once, to the study of Mr. Everard, who had been for some moments awaiting him. He fell on one knee before his revered and best, but injured friend, and with a hoarse, but unfaltering voice, he said, "Father, forgive the wrong I —," but before he could utter another word, Mr. Everard instantly checked him; and, in a tone of unwonted sternness, he exclaimed, "Rise, Willoughby; forbear in that posture of humility, to call any man, '*father*.' I am no confessor. Whatever be the sin you desire to acknowledge, go and kneel to Him, who alone, holds right to judge,

and power to absolve. Confess to me, if you will, as man to man; and if you have done me wrong, may I have grace to forgive, even as I hope to be forgiven."

Ernest had instantly arisen, for he felt awed by that dignified rebuke. Without reply, he now at once, meekly revealed his purpose, and in few words attempted a defence, which, however, he knew full well, would neither convince nor be understood. Mr. Everard, who had risen from his chair when Ernest knelt before him, now again sat down, amazed, and for a time was overpowered. He laid his head upon his hand, while the throbbing of his temples became visible; at length, he said with deep emotion: "Is it, indeed, come to this, Ernest Willoughby? I will urge you no more; God only, can deal with such a fearful delusion. Go, sir, leave me, for I can bear no more to-night. And yet," he added, meekly, "this is no time for *pride*. Go, Ernest; may the Lord forgive and bless you, as I will pray for strength to do."

Mr. Everard bowed his head upon his clasped hands, as he thought of the blighted happiness of his darling child. Ernest, would at that moment, gladly have laid down his life, could he have spared that good and honoured man, the anguish of which he alone, was the ungrateful cause; but it was part of his own heavy penance, which could neither be miti-

gated nor remitted. He dared not, however, longer look upon the wreck he had made ; but stooping down, to kiss the hand which still supported the forehead of the suffering father, Ernest murmured a last farewell, and then rushed forth to his own room ; where, no human eye was witness, to the agony of the night's conflict, of mingled remorse and triumph, within the soul of that infatuated, but devoted young man.

Shrill and clear, sounded the horn of the early mail, on the ensuing morning, reverberating from cliff to rock, through the still air, while scarcely yet another sound of life was heard. Alice, whose sleep had been light and uneasy, started from her bed to the window ; and looking out from between the bars of her venetian blind, she caught sight of the distant coach, as it drove rapidly through the winding road towards the avenue of Earlswood. In a few moments afterwards, Ernest Willoughby rushed from the Hall, followed by a servant, who with difficulty kept pace with the impetuous haste of his master. " Will he not give one look back," thought Alice, " to the home of our happiest years ?" She waited, and she watched, still Ernest turned not, nor did he stay his onward speed, until the last spot was reached, from which the window, of his long-loved Alice, could be seen. There he paused ; motioned the servant to go on ; and *then* he turned one last, lingering look,

where all he loved most on earth, was left for ever, and then he hurried on without another pause, and Alice saw her betrothed no more !

Again, the horn blew clear and loud ; but fainter and more faintly, its echoes died away ; falling like a knell upon the desolate heart of Alice Everard. She turned from the world without ; a painful silence was around her. Why was that stillness so oppressive, as if all that was living had left her ? She felt that she could no longer rest ; and although the hour was yet earlier, than her usual time of rising, she partly dressed herself, and sat down to a work, in which, she had engaged ; collecting texts, and extracts from valuable sources, bearing upon the controversy at issue, between Ernest and herself ; that her well-regulated mind, might be diverted by useful occupation, from vain regrets and painful associations. Thus was she employed, when her servant came as usual to call her ; who, giving her a sealed packet, said, that it had been left in her charge by Mr. Willoughby, with an injunction, not to deliver it to her mistress, until the usual hour of her rising.

“Did you take care that he had a comfortable breakfast, Harvey ?” inquired Alice, blushing.

“The breakfast was put all comfortable for him, miss,” replied the girl ; “and with my own hands I made some beautiful coffee ; but Mr. Ernest only

took a cup of it, and didn't eat anything at all. Indeed, miss, he looked very cast down."

Alice gave a deep sigh, but made no further remark. She fixed her eyes upon an open volume before her, until the servant had again withdrawn; and then, moving from the table to her sofa, as if more completely to *dégagée* herself from all other objects, she sat down, and opened what was, alas! too truly, in its deepest sense, the last farewell of Ernest Willoughby.

Another hour passed away. The prayer-bell rang—the household assembled, and Mr. Everard with slow and languid steps, took his accustomed place; but paused awhile, as if waiting for the absent one, who, so rarely was last, at the sweet gathering time of morning worship. Soon, however, without remark, he commenced reading from the Word of God, in a voice so unusually low and tremulous, that more than once, he seemed unable to go on. But, oh! how rarely is it, that the blessed source of holy inspiration, fails to impart power to the feeble, and consolation to the broken in heart. So, as he prayed, Mr. Everard gained strength and encouragement, to "hope all things;" to believe, that our "light afflictions, are but for a moment;" that, "like as a father pitieth his own children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." Thus, then, he hoped; and so would he believe for his child, in her deep sorrow;

while his own soul, rose up on the wings of faith, until reaching the "upper springs" of a believer's resting-place, he could say with a firm, unflinching voice, "Yea, though He slay me yet will I trust in God."

The service closed with the benediction. Again Mr. Everard looked round, but his child was not there. Poor Alice! she had heard no bell; she had taken no heed of time; for years of the past, had crowded into that one hour of bitter endurance, as if the whole lifetime of hope had, in that hour, passed away before her, and expired!

Softly the anxious father, trod the way leading to the bed-room of his stricken girl; and with a vague foreboding that he might find her dead, he at once opened her door, but felt unspeakably thankful that this, at least, had been spared him.

Alice was sitting on a low ottoman, beside her couch; her arm, thrown across its pillow, on which rested her bowed head; and in the other hand, which hung motionless by her side, was tightly pressed a crushed note, while on the sofa, apparently unread, lay some closely written sheets of paper, only partially unfolded, embodying the history of the young Tractarian's perversion from the Reformed, to what he called, the "Anglo-Catholic Church;" his self-dedication to its service, and final renunciation of every earthly tie. Alice, was still dressed only as the ser-

earnest of submissive and obedient trust, which she desired to feel, but dared not in her weakness yet express. At length, suddenly raising herself up more completely, she laid her hand fondly on her father's cheek, and exclaimed, "Oh! papa, forgive my selfish grief, that leaves you kneeling by my side, so long to bear the whole weight of my powerless frame. Rise, dearest father, and sit here by my side a little; while for I must speak one word of—*him*, and then, henceforth, his name must be as one forgotten among us."

Mr. Everard did not oppose her wish; he deemed it better that, for the present, her mind should have its way. But the Lord was ever before him; he asked his child, "Can you not first kneel down, and pray with me, my darling? We have both much to ask, and much to acknowledge."

Alice at once obeyed; and for some minutes supplication and praise, and humble confession of sins, which, well they knew, needed fire to remove, mingled in the prayers of that righteous man, and rose unseen within the veil of the Temple above, upborne by an "angel's hand," as incense meet for the "golden altar," which is "before the throne of God."

Father and daughter, rose from their knees; the one strengthened, and the other soothed. Mr. *Everard*, saw with deep thankfulness, that the fury of

the tempest had been stayed ; the lightning's force had spent itself, and left the sweet lily of his home, bent down, indeed, but neither broken nor destroyed.

Alice, gathered up her fallen hair, and sitting down by her father's side, she pointed to the ball of crumpled paper, lying where it had dropt from her hand ; then said in a low, but composed voice, " Papa, I need not repeat to you what *that*, in few words, told *me*,—that *we have parted for ever !* And here ;" she added, taking up the loose sheets, lying scarcely unfolded upon the sofa, on which she was now sitting ; " here, is what he calls, his ' defence.' Take all away, my father ; for, to me, they could offer no defence at all ; I wish not to see the mere transcript of his tempter's mind. Every sentence is Mr. Grey's ; in substance at least, if not in words. I have nothing now to do with it. To the mercy of our heavenly Father I leave him."

The voice of Alice faltered, but with renewed effort she soon continued, " My own dear father, will you grant me one favour ? I need not urge you to pray for him, *that* I know you will do ; but will you break this to our dear Algy, before he comes home to us, touching lightly as you can upon the wrong, which both of you, I know, will say has been done, so recklessly, to me ?"

" I will say anything in reason, my precious girl,"

replied Mr. Everard ; “ but nothing can ever change my opinion of that wrong ; and Algy would be unworthy of my high esteem, were he, to feel it less deeply than myself.”

Alice, with woman’s strange, tenacious faithfulness, now deprecated the very blame, she had herself, so unsparingly expressed, in the first moment of her indignant sorrow. “ Read *that*, papa,” she said, taking up the farewell letter, still lying upon the ground, and putting it into her father’s hand ; “ Read that, and see how fearfully he suffers ! Oh ! let us not heap coals of fire upon his head, when already he is bowed down, well nigh to the grave, beneath the weight of a sinfully imposed sacrifice ! He has been betrayed into this fatal delusion ; and though I say not he has acted wisely, yet he *thinks* he has done well, in giving up all for conscience sake. Father, say that you forgive him.”

“ It is not for me to judge him harshly, Alice,” replied Mr. Everard, sorrowfully ; “ pray for him I do, and will.”

“ And forgive him, too, my father ! For the sake of all that he has been to us ; for *my sake* ;” said Alice, imploringly. “ It is all I ask ; all now that I myself may do ; for never more would I, if I could, be to him as once I was. No, papa, do not mistake me ; were he now to lay empires at my feet, I would *not* be again his promised bride—never, never would I be his wife !”

Again she burst into a flood of tears, and again her patient father soothed her mind, and when he saw her more composed, he folded the letters together, which had so fatally disturbed her, and putting them in his bosom, he affectionately urged her to try and rest. To this she offered no resistance, for she felt too much exhausted for further effort; rather did she gladly suffer him to arrange the pillows of her sofa, and help to lay her down, so wearied was she by excitement and grief. An old and faithful servant of the family, greatly attached to Alice, now took the father's place beside her; and having by affectionate importunity, at last, induced her to take part of the breakfast which she had brought her, she quietly sat down to watch her young mistress; and to ponder on the strange destiny of love, which so rarely seemed, she thought, to "run smoothly," even through the pathway of the rich and good.

Mr. Everard soon returned to look upon his sorrowing child; but Alice heard him not, for she lay in the happy unconsciousness of a profound and tranquil sleep.

And where was Ernest Willoughby at the close of that eventful day? He had reached London ere the sun had set; but before it rose again on the morrow's dawn, he too, lay unconscious of the world without; but not in sleep;—his were the waking

dreams of wild delirium, while Mr. Grey, with all the fond solicitude of a brother, was bending over him, to bathe his burning forehead. Nature was outworn. The "silver cord," strained beyond the limits of her control, thrilled with the thousand throbbings of a disordered brain!

CHAPTER XIII.

"I see that all are wanderers, gone astray,
Each in his own delusions they are lost ;
In chase of fancied happiness, still wooed
And never won."

COWPER.

OH! what a world is London! Extremes of wealth and poverty—luxury and wretchedness—learning and ignorance—piety and irreligion—all mingle there, in one dense crowd of human beings, and yet, each class so separate, that they of the one, can scarcely realise the existence of any other.

In the drawing-room of a house in Portland-place, sat the Lady Gertrude Austyn alone, and apparently in deep meditation; for, although upon the table near her, lay the materials of some costly embroidery, she was leaning her head listlessly on her hand, occupied only in thought. She was, however, startled from her reverie, by a voice calling her from an

inner room ; when, immediately rising, she passed through the folding-doors, and found Clara Mowbray in some perplexity about the work on which she was employed. It was a beautiful cloth, or cover of white kerseymere ; fringed and bordered with gold and green, embroidered over with stars of the same ; the whole being apparently completed, excepting a space left unfinished, for which Clara had just penciled a design, and wished to have the opinion of her friend, as to its fitness for the purpose intended, before she ventured to sketch it upon the delicate cloth itself. Lady Gertrude looked at it, and shook her head, playfully remarking, “ Oh, Clara ! I believe you will be Lady Abbess yet. But that will never do, in this country of matter-of-fact Protestants ; we must initiate them, gradually, to these holy emblems of a true faith, ere we venture to throw such a pearl before their eyes.”

“ Nay, Gertrude,” said Clara, in a vexed tone, “ it is partly copied from the group in your shrine, and is scarcely different from that upon your enamelled clasp ; neither of which, I presume, you will discard, because upon cold English ground ?”

“ Such gems I tell you, Clara dear, must, for the present, be reserved for our private devotions. The sacred cross, with initials and a glory round it, must content you : or, perhaps, the *Agnus Dei*, if you like it better.”

Clara looked wistfully at her drawing. It was a Madonna and Child, beautifully designed, with a crown of seven stars above the head of the Virgin Mother. After a pause, she looked up with a countenance of almost childish mortification, and said pettishly, "But, Gertrude, the Agnus Dei would be far more suitable for *your* altar cloth than for this, which, you know, will be exclusively dedicated to the blessed Virgin Mary, used only on the festivals appointed by the Church for her commemoration. I am sure, nothing can be more appropriate than this holy group."

Lady Gertrude, was amused at the evident disappointment of her companion, and again laughing, she said, "I tell you, my dear Clara, it will never do. We should be gazetted through the length and breadth of the land, as rank idolaters, were we to exhibit such a piece of pious reverence as that, in a Protestant place of worship."

"How very awful," said Clara, with great solemnity, "to call adoration of our Lord's mother *idolatry*! as if veneration and worship were one and the same."

"The Evangelicals, Clarry dear, would accuse you of splitting nothing better than a Roman straw, in any definition you could give of the difference, I think," replied Gertrude, with an arch smile.

At that moment, a loud knocking at the hall-door

proclaimed a visitor ; but as it was yet early day, the two girls, made no attempt to close the folding-doors, between them, and the general reception room ; judging rightly, that none but one of the family, or a very intimate friend, would be admitted to their presence at that hour. Presently, Mr. Grey was announced ; who, without ceremony joined the fair companions in their more private room, by both of whom he was cordially welcomed. Lady Gertrude looked anxiously at him, as holding out her hand, she asked, “ Have you seen him this morning ? ”

“ I have ; ” replied Mr. Grey, in an under tone, “ and have just heard him pronounced out of danger.”

“ Thank God for that ! ” exclaimed Lady Gertrude, earnestly, and deeply blushing, while about to say more ; but she was instantly checked by a significant look from Mr. Grey towards Clara Mowbray, well understood as a caution to silence. A tear glistened on her eyelids ; but with that wonderful play of countenance, which we have before noticed, as almost peculiar to herself, the expression changed in a moment, from one of deep earnestness, to a smile of irresistible sweetness, which lighted up her beautiful face with the brightness of a sunbeam, as she exclaimed, “ You are come most *apropos*, Mr. Grey, to give advice upon a matter of serious moment, if you will condescend to bestow it, upon a

lady's embroidery. What think you of the Madonna and Child, to decorate the altar of an English church?"

Clara Mowbray, looked reproachfully at her friend, for what she deemed, an irreverent tone, considering the subject of her careless allusion. She had, while Gertrude was speaking to Mr. Grey, spread her superb cover upon a table at the further end of the room, and now offered the design, intended to occupy the centre of the fall, with a solemnity which the occasion scarcely seemed to warrant. Mr. Grey, nevertheless, received it with silent gravity; and after giving it a few moments' attention, he looked, with an approving smile at Clara, whom he had long regarded as a lamb of his own fold, and said, addressing himself rather to her, than in direct reply to Lady Gertrude, "You have done well, my daughter, to cherish a spirit of pious veneration for the Virgin Mother of our Lord. Better would it be, were it more generally inculcated among the religious professors of our Anglican community, that the images of Christ and the blessed Virgin, and other saints, should receive due honour and veneration. 'There was a primitive doctrine on all these points,' 'so widely diffused, and so respectably supported, that it may well be entertained as a matter of opinion, by a theologian now.'*" But, in the present alienated

* Tract 90.

condition, we must be cautious not to cast pearls into the pathway of the scorner, lest they should be 'trodden under foot,' and blasphemed; but rather, let a holy reserve be exercised in the use of these mystic emblems, which can only be discerned by 'those, whose humility and piety of heart have gifted with clearness of mental vision. To such, indeed, 'the simplest picture of the blessed Mary, ever Virgin, bearing in her arms the Infant Jesus, cannot fail to excite in minds, duly disposed to acts of faith and love, the most truly devotional dispositions;' but to the profane, it becomes as a snare and a stumbling-block, and we must not throw what is 'holy to the dogs.' I, therefore, agree with the presumed opinion of Lady Gertrude, that the Anglican Christians, are not yet prepared for the restoration of these devotional channels of true piety, which unhappily, the Reformers, so-called, sacrilegiously expunged from the English branch of the Catholic Church, and which it must be the aim of every faithful Anglo-Catholic to bring back, at first with reverence and caution; nevertheless, I should be deeply pained, could I believe, that the Lady Gertrude was indifferent to these truly Catholic aids, to spirituality of mind and heart."

Lady Gertrude felt, that a somewhat uncalled for rebuke was here implied, for the manner in which she had introduced a subject not, she thought, need-

ing the solemnity which Clara attached to it. She coloured slightly, and replied with more of haughtiness than deference in her tone, "I did not hesitate in the appropriation of that sacred piece, for the very reasons on which, Mr. Grey himself, has been pleased to ground his counsel for its omission, in the present fettered state of the English Church."

Mr. Grey, in his turn, felt piqued, but with his usual bland and gentle address, he simply replied, "You have mistaken me, Lady Gertrude; I have no fears for one, who has already so essentially served the Church at the sacrifice of personal feeling."

Lady Gertrude coloured yet more deeply than before, and replied, "I fear, Mr. Grey, that I as little merit praise on that ground, as reproof on the other. My will was never consenting, and my reason, perhaps, is less convinced than ever."

A shade passed over the pale countenance of Mr. Grey, but it expressed more of sorrow than displeasure. Anxious, however, to divert the mind of Lady Gertrude from regrets, which he too well understood, he returned to the subject of Clara's work, advising her, in a tone of absent indifference, to fill the vacant space left for the Madonna, merely with stars uniform with the whole.

"Or, do you not think," said Clara, "that smaller stars, corresponding with the larger ones, grouped together in the form of a cross, with a crown sur-

mounting it, such as I have sketched above the head of the Virgin, would be very *unique*, giving a significance to the whole, and yet without offending the Puritan prejudices of even an Evangelical? But," she added, looking towards Gertrude with a meaning glance, "it shall be as *you* direct, Mr. Grey; for I desire that *my* reason should ever be curbed by obedience to holy Church, leaving *convictions* to those who are appointed to act upon them."

Mr. Grey felt exceedingly vexed, but with his surpassing power of self-command, he calmly replied, "Be it as you will, in the arrangement of your stars, my dear Clara, the Church *directs* only where its vitals interests are concerned, connected with the ingathering of her children."

Clara, who had been perfectly ignorant of the by-play, in which her companions had touched upon allusions, altogether foreign to herself or her work; took it for granted, that they related wholly to Gertrude's want of submission to the dictates of their spiritual adviser, while feeling gratified at the contrast, which she fancied Mr. Grey had implied, in his last remark between herself the docile saint; and Lady Gertrude the still rebellious novice. With a smile of childish triumph,—for she was naturally too amiable to be ungenerous in *motive*,—she now refolded her delicate work, while Gertrude, who saw her smile, and comprehended it, looked at her for a

moment with a countenance of indignant pity, and then passed into the drawing-room with the step of a queen.

She was soon followed by Mr. Grey, who closed the folding-doors, and walked forward to the window, near which he found her standing. In a dignified, but respectful tone, he said, "Lady Gertrude, I have inadvertently pained you ; my words were misunderstood. I am more than satisfied with your growing devotedness to the Catholic Church ; but did I need a proof, that even in its minor details of artistic decorations, you feel a holy jealousy of what is due to her, as 'the King's daughter,' I see it *there*, in that 'vesture of gold and raiment of needlework,' meet offering from one of her virgin daughters, in a pious emulation of the maidens of Tyre."

This allusion was to a magnificent altar cloth of rich crimson velvet, gorgeously, but with exquisite taste, embroidered with gold, lying partly unfolded, in a yet unfinished state on the sofa to which Mr. Grey pointed.

Lady Gertrude, whose temper was seldom long ruffled, said, with one of her sweet, ingenuous smiles, "I think we have sufficiently discussed the merits of needlework, Mr. Grey ; especially, as there seems to be just now, an adverse influence in the starry firmament, threatening war between certain belligerent powers. So, now to more sublunary things, of which

I have a whole catalogue waiting your sign manual. But, first, will my reverend confessor absolve me from the acknowledged sin of wrong towards him in petulance, which, I know, very often tries my kind and patient instructor?"

"Who could do otherwise than absolve so self-condemned a penitent? Hard must that heart be, Lady Gertrude, which could give *you* aught but blessing," replied Mr. Grey, so fervently that his companion was again awed into seriousness, which she had been trying to dispel.

Both, were for a few moments silent, and then Mr. Grey, looking up with a pale and languid countenance, said, "And now what is it you wish to ask of me?"

"When may I see poor Ernest Willoughby?" inquired Gertrude, meekly.

"Not at present;" replied Mr. Grey; "he is not yet allowed to leave his room, and although, I trust, he is quite out of danger, everything must be avoided which could excite or fatigue him."

"Is he still, at times, delirious, then?" asked Gertrude.

"Not in the least. He is calm and patient as a lamb, and when not in a drowsy state, which is but the natural effect of his medicine, he is perfectly conscious of all that is said, and very anxious to leave England as soon as he can safely be removed.

The chaplaincy is, of course, given up, but he will accompany me, as an invalid, to Rome; and convinced that change of scene will do more than anything towards his restoration, I purpose to expedite my own arrangements, that, if possible, we may commence our journey in about ten days. In the meantime, I must still urge the necessity of silence, as regards his being in London; as I believe it important, that it should be concealed from this family especially; and I almost think it unadvisable, that he should see even *you*, Lady Gertrude, in his present state, associated as you are with so much, which, for a time, must be painful to him."

Lady Gertrude felt disappointed, but she rarely opposed the advice of Mr. Grey, which was regarded almost as law. She remained silent for a little while; and then, with a deep sigh, she said, "Not a line have I yet received from Alice or my uncle; and if I write, what can I say? Time was, when in sorrow like this, we would have suffered and sympathised together; but now I feel how little comfort I could give her."

"And a time will come, Lady Gertrude," said Mr. Grey, "when you may rejoice together for the blessedness of this very sorrow. A glorious victory has been achieved: the warrior will come forth with his soul's armour, like polished steel, refined and tempered, from the fire by which, the coarser

elements of its earthly dross has been, for ever, consumed."

"I cannot, perhaps, follow you, Mr. Grey, in the casuistry of such high philosophy," said Lady Gertrude, mournfully; "but I have heard that warriors after a battle won in a good and righteous cause, feel an honest pride in the part, however subordinate, which they have bravely performed, towards a well-earned victory, and return from their warfare with shouts of triumph and a song of joy. Such, too, I once learnt was the parable of a good man, when, at the point of death, he looked back upon his spiritual battle against the enemies of his peace, which had been vanquished in the struggle; and to that man, the grave was but an outlet from the scene of a painful warfare, to his happy home of peace and rest, where sin could never call him to the fight again. If such be the character of the victory *you* speak of, why do *I* feel only like a deserter from my Master's camp? no song of joy rising to my lips, no sound of triumph falling on my ear! What are *our* trophies, Mr. Grey? The broken heart of Alice Everard, the sweet sister of my motherless childhood. The dishonoured wreck—for so the world must deem him—of a once noble youth, on whose face I shall never see the radiant smile of happiness again! The father and the brother alike cast down by a common sorrow. To all this, I have rendered my too willing

aid, and my conscience tells me, the work is rather a wreck, than a victory — a ruin, and no ‘glorious achievement!’ at least, its fruits, in my own heart, are but remorse and regret. Oh, Mr. Grey! is this — can this be of God? Why should Ernest Willoughby be an outcast from home; all its dearest ties denied him, when so many good and pious servants of the Church are blest and blessing others, as husbands, fathers, masters, and ministers?”

Mr. Grey was painfully surprised, and the last words of the unconscious girl before him, struck like daggers to his soul. Too truly did his own heart respond to the doubts thus raised before him; but he struggled to cast them forth, as unworthy of his high vocation and holy resolutions.

“I see that I have distressed you, Mr. Grey; that you are disappointed, to find how little progress I have made, towards that pious obedience and submission to the Church, which you have laboured so faithfully to teach me;” said Lady Gertrude, inwardly reproaching herself for the pain she had necessarily inflicted upon that gentle and devoted being. “I do but tell you what my heart dictates, and what my reason prompts the heart to feel. Only convince me that such dictates are contrary to the will of God, and I will yield my judgment without another word.”

“Little, indeed, did I think to hear the Lady

Gertrude reason thus, under the influence of a most unholy impulse ;” replied Mr. Grey, deeply perplexed, his voice tremulous with emotion ; “and yet I cannot harshly blame you ; a time has been, when thoughts like these have risen within my own heart, to destroy the tender germs of that blessed faith, which the serpent of evil knows full well must spring up to strength and power, only to destroy his own. But peril not your peace, Lady Gertrude ; peril not the salvation, perhaps, of others so dear to you, in whose earthly trials you naturally sympathise, and would fain avert at the sacrifice of far higher considerations. Alas ! your religion has been nurtured in the school of reason, and to what does this lead ? Eve reasoned, where she should have simply obeyed. She sought knowledge from a forbidden source ; and she, who might have lived in Paradise for ever, ignorant of sin and sorrow, became, of all women, the most sinful and unhappy.”

“Poor Eve !” said Lady Gertrude, smiling ; “her children are truly an unforgiving and spiteful race ; for they never cease to roll the fatal apple of her downfall, before the shade of her memory, whenever their own misdeeds require excuse or shelter. But, Mr. Grey, Eve reasoned with the ‘father of lies,’ and so lost Eden ; had she reasoned on the ‘Word of God,’ when first the arch-tempter urged her to reject it, she had been safe.”

“And with such warning,” replied Mr. Grey, “gratefully should her daughters estimate the safety provided for them in holy Church; that they may rest securely upon the guidance of pastors, whose office is to instruct and lead the young and inexperienced, and hedge them round with safeguards, against dangers, arising from their own undirected judgment, in matters touching the deep things of God. But think you that this is a light office? Are the cares of a household consistent with the duties, and the vows of a priest, set apart, and consecrated for the exclusive service of God—the agent of His holy mysteries? There is, indeed, no command in the Anglican Church, binding upon her clergy, to renounce the worldly ties of home and kindred, and the secular cares of house and lands; but the advice of St. Paul is high authority, to enforce such a renunciation on those who, like himself, would serve the Lord without distraction: in this respect, the Church of Rome has acted more wisely than our own, in pressing it upon her priesthood as a law. You have, yourself, acknowledged with reverence and admiration, the exalted piety of the Jansenists and Jesuits; the high spiritual attainments, which so eminently signalised the holy sisterhood of Port Royal, and other saints devoted to monastic seclusion, whose examples you have nobly desired to imitate. And if it be enjoined upon all

men, as a duty, to leave 'father and mother, and houses and lands,' for the Redeemer's sake; can it be less stringent upon the ministers of religion to eschew such cares, and to avoid the claims which worldly possessions demand? And, passing onward from a life of toil, and trial, and loneliness, to an eternity hereafter, what is the high reward awaiting such houseless, landless, holy pilgrims, for the truth's sake? Your Bible, Lady Gertrude, will tell you, that it is they above all others, who are said to 'stand without fault before the throne of God.' To this blessed vocation, Ernest Willoughby, vowed himself voluntarily, and with a pious resolution, patiently to abide the cost of such a sacrifice. Then woe be to him; or to her who would tempt him, to rescind the vow to his destruction."

"All this is true, indeed;" said Gertrude, turning pale; "but it is nevertheless very sad. Well may those, who would be happy, early seek a cloistered home, where scenes of human sorrow cannot disturb the pious soul, or break the heart which takes part in the tragedy of social life. My poor Alice! for her sake, I wish that Ernest had never entered the ministry."

"That," replied Mr. Grey, "is rather a natural than a holy wish. In the present state of the Church, her ministers are called upon to make great sacrifices, and blessed will he be, who stands in the

foremost rank of her deliverers. This should be a strong ground of consolation to your cousin, as well as a high motive on the part, both of herself, and Willoughby, patiently to endure the trials involved in their mutual sacrifice for a holy cause."

Gertrude gave a deep sigh, but made no immediate reply. "I suppose you are right," she said, after a pause of some moments; "I must, therefore, be guided by your better judgment, Mr. Grey, and like your docile pupil Clara, leave *convictions* to you. Now, to speak of other things, how is 'The Home of Peace' going on? and are the new sisters arrived?"

"All is rapidly progressing," replied Mr. Grey, glad to change the conversation from a subject as painful to himself as to Gertrude; "the Oratory is nearly completed, and when finished will, I think, be extremely beautiful; but I fear the expense will exceed our calculations, and that we shall require more funds; but, in the course of a few months, it will doubtless be self-supporting. Eight sisters are now in full commission, and another is shortly expected, whose income is considerable."

"I can give you a cheque upon papa's agent; whenever you like," said Lady Gertrude, "to the amount I promised you; also one, for a hundred pounds, towards the rood screen of St. ——— Church."

“Such pious offerings will have their reward;” said Mr. Grey, but was prevented from further acknowledgments by the entrance of Lady Mowbray, followed by Clara; who had, evidently, displeased her mother, whose countenance still retained the traces of vexation.

“Good morning, Mr. Grey, I am glad to see you; pray be seated,” she said, while sitting down upon the sofa, without appearing to notice the offered hand of her guest, who had not of late been so great a favourite as once he was. Mr. Grey, however, took no notice of her apparent coldness, but turning to Lady Gertrude, he was about to take his leave, when again Lady Mowbray requested him to be seated, adding, “Pray spare me a few minutes of your time, if nothing very important claims it elsewhere.”

Mr. Grey quietly obeyed, and with his usual composure awaited her commands. Her ladyship then continued, “I am, as you must be quite aware, sir, thoroughly attached to the Church of England, and I trust, you have ever found me practically consistent with my profession as such; you will not, therefore, misunderstand me, in urging upon Clara, duties which are imperative upon her as a daughter; not to be neglected, as I regret to say, has lately been the case, for incessant services and ceremonies of the Church, to which, publicly and privately, her whole

time is devoted, to the exclusion, of even, that filial deference to her mother's claims, which, I think, I have a right to expect ; allowing' all that is due to the Church, which, I presume, does not require such exclusiveness."

"Most assuredly not," replied Mr. Grey, looking kindly towards Clara, "nor does Miss Mowbray herself, I am persuaded, *intend* to disregard your wishes ; although her religious zeal, in itself most commendable, may have led her, inadvertently, to the error of which you complain. Henceforth she will better time her religious exercises, so that they may not trench upon the claims, unquestionably, due to your ladyship."

Clara, who had meekly borne her mother's rebuke, looked up gratefully at Mr. Grey, and said, "Mamma knows that I desire to please her, but she disapproves of my regular attendance on early matins at St. ——— Church, and you will not, I think, advise me to yield compliance, where a prior duty calls me to resist ; much as it pains me to do so, in opposition to her commands."

"You would be doing your duty, in a far higher sense, I imagine," said Lady Mowbray, in reply to this bold defiance, "to be more with your invalid brother, and less absorbed in selfish avocations ; for selfish they are, Clara, when they lead you so wholly to disregard the comfort of others. It is not your

attendance upon the early service at church, of which I complain, under ordinary circumstances; but when poor Arthur, after a restless night, asked you to read the Bible to him this morning, and that I desired you to do so, I consider your refusal was neither a religious duty towards God, nor a Christian act towards your brother. And how little are you in his room to nurse and to amuse him, while you spend hours in nursing the poor people, who really do not want you; and then devote the remainder of your time in 'sacred embroidery,' as you call it, and other works, which neither tend to your own improvement or to the good of others."

Mr. Grey, who was anxious to mediate between mother and daughter, aware that both were at fault, took advantage of a moment's pause, saying, in a tone of persuasiveness, "With your permission, Lady Mowbray, I will privately admonish your daughter upon the subject of your animadversions; and, I think, I can pledge my word, that she will be perfectly amenable to your wishes for the future, persuaded as I am, on the other hand, that you require no more than a reasonable submission on her part, without any compromise of her religious duties."

"Then be it so, Mr. Grey," replied Lady Mowbray, with evident emotion. "The fact is, I have very little comfort in my own home; there is now such a spirit of discord among us, such an absence

of union and confidence. I am Anglo-Catholic at heart—I hate Dissent, and everything puritanical; for I think religion should have its place, and the Church is its province. But the world, too, has its own claims, and in these the Church has no right to interfere. Nevertheless, if you do not take care, Mr. Grey, Clara will, I firmly believe, turn Roman Catholic, with all her out-of-place devotions, and crosses, and rosaries; and this would be quite as displeasing to her father and myself, as the ultra-Protestantism of her brother, Captain Mowbray; although, as to him, I must in justice say, that he is a very great comfort to us all just now. But, indeed, what with my poor sick Arthur up stairs; and the incessant contradictions and controversies down stairs, between Sir Willis and his children; added to Clara's increasing disobedience to myself, I often wish we were all heathens in some far-off land."

Lady Gertrude crossed the room, and sitting down by the side of Lady Mowbray, she said affectionately, "Talk not of Clara's disobedience, dear aunty;" as she often called her in her playful moods. "This morning, I fear, the fault was mine, if her long absence displeased you, as it was I, who proposed our going to St. ——— Church, and it was, I know, very late when we returned."

"I am quite aware," said Lady Mowbray, "that in your example, Gertrude, Clara finds ample en-

couragement in her Romanising tendencies. But *you* are, of course, at perfect liberty to do as you please."

Gertrude felt the injustice of this unmerited retort, and, again rising, she walked to the window to avoid further discussions. A painful silence followed, but happily, it was soon disturbed by the entrance of Captain Mowbray, the eldest son of Sir Willis, a tall, gentlemanly young man, of most prepossessing appearance. He saw at a glance that something was wrong, by his mother's countenance, but made no remark. After a somewhat distant recognition of Mr. Grey, which was returned with the same cold courtesy, he passed to where Lady Gertrude was still standing, and cordially shook hands with her.

Mr. Grey had risen to take his departure, but he paused to say a few words to Clara, in a low voice ; appointing an early hour on the morrow for a private interview, urging upon her, in the meanwhile, submission to her mother. He then took leave of Lady Mowbray, and merely bowing courteously to the others, he left the room. Lady Mowbray and Clara soon followed, leaving Gertrude laughing at some remark which her companion had addressed to her. "Oh, no!" she exclaimed, "I cannot, indeed, countenance such an assembly of seceders, unless I might take possession of the platform myself, and harangue you all, upon the sin of such heretical proceedings.

The Anglican Church has suffered enough already, through the evil deeds of the Reformers, and now that we, her faithful children, are doing all we can to restore her ancient rights, and so bring back the 'unity of faith,' which has been so cruelly disrupted, your Reformation Society seems determined to revive the fatal feuds which before destroyed them. But we shall be too strong for you, this time, depend upon it."

"*We!*" exclaimed Captain Mowbray, with emphasis. "Our Society has nothing to do with you, my fair friend, except in the way of warning. Our mission is to win the hearts of Roman Catholics to the pure faith of Protestant Christianity, and surely you claim no heritage among the seven hills of Rome?"

"I claim a birthright in the apostolic charter of her holy Church; of which we Anglicans, are assuredly, a branch," replied Lady Gertrude, smiling; "and yours would be a righteous cause, if, instead of uprooting the parent tree, you would be content to prune away its corruptions, and water the tender offshoots, which are beginning to show a healthy growth. Do this in a loving, patient spirit, and I will join you, heart and hand in such reformation, and pray you, God speed."

"That is exactly what we most earnestly desire to do," said Captain Mowbray; "we would fain

disengage from the roots of the parent tree, the rank and poisonous weeds, which have so long cankered its vital energies ; engendering an unwholesome miasma, in the very atmosphere around it. To drop all metaphor, dear Lady Gertrude, we would fain restore union of faith, by union of principles ; but that can only be done by first, establishing the *Bible*, as the only universal standard of that holy faith, un-mutilated by those human systems, which have disorganised the beautiful structure of apostolic Christianity, by seeking to exalt that, which was laid low at the foot of the cross, and debasing what was exalted at the resurrection. For there, the types of the law, once fraught with expressive significance, passed away for ever, giving place to Him in whom ‘dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily,’ realising that significance in the ministrations of the Spirit. But a counterfeit has been raised ; the material substituting the immaterial ; religion itself brought down to a carnal system of idolatry, by magnifying outward ceremonies and ordinances to an importance, which the religion of Christ, nowhere sanctions. Indeed, so simple is the teaching of our Lord, that it leaves no room nor warrant for the admixture of such ‘weak and beggarly elements’ with the glorious Gospel of the blessed God ; and it is from this admixture, Lady Gertrude, that true Protestant Christians aim to disengage the ‘Temple of the Lord,’

whether it lies within the Church of England or the Church of Rome. Even *that* fragment of a carnal worship, would I, if I could, tear piecemeal, rather than it should adorn the sacramental table of a Church, professedly Protestant."

Lady Gertrude reddened, as she turned towards the sofa, on which lay her gorgeous work. "Were the maidens of Tyre thought to desecrate the temple of *their* day, by such offerings of needlework and wrought gold?" she asked.

"Even granted, that David alluded, literally, to such offerings in his description of the spiritual Church, under a figure of the 'queen,' or 'King's daughter,' which I need scarcely remind Lady Gertrude was not the case;" replied Captain Mowbray, "it offers no sanction to us, in the Churches under the Christian dispensation, to imitate the mysterious ceremonies of the Tabernacle, which, like shadows, were swept away by the glorious advent of the Son of God. Wherever, two or three are gathered together in the Redeemer's name, *there* is the Church of God, for the great Head of the Church is in the 'midst of them.'"

"Would you then," asked Gertrude, "have no visible Church, nor form of worship?"

"It has been said by one of the best and soundest clergymen of the day," replied Captain Mowbray, "that 'fallen man needs a system of means and ap-

pliances for his restoration, and God, in condescension to our weakness, and to aid us in drawing near to Himself, saw fit to record His name in special places, where, He would specially come and bless His people;’ and therefore ‘while they are in some sort tokens of our infirmity, they are no less symbols of the grace which has visited us in our ruin.’ * Such, then, we may regard our ‘house of prayer,’ and everything in and about it should be appropriate, for a spiritual, but not a carnal worship. Our professed object in assembling, there is to meet the Lord invisible, in our approach to an unseen ‘throne of grace;’ to confess sins which *can* be revealed *only* to the great Searcher of hearts—to ask remission of those sins, through the merits of our risen Saviour, and to pray for sanctification through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, whose life-giving breath is felt, but never seen. The more simple, then, our outward forms of worship, surely the more earnest will be our devotions, as more consistent with the economy of grace, in which outward types, now no longer needed, have been superseded by the inartificial incense of prayer and praise. Our blessed Lord, especially impressed upon us this very truth, when the woman of Samaria boasted of the place in which ‘her fathers worshipped,’ He replied, with touching simplicity, ‘Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall

* Rev. Hugh Stowell.

neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father;' again repeating, with significant emphasis, 'But the hour cometh, and now is, when the *true worshippers* shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.' And such is the worship of every true believer, who, while sincerely estimating all the means of grace, instituted by our Lord and His apostles, will, assuredly, most eschew every approach to idolatry, in the use of those 'vain oblations,' which are unworthy of heartfelt piety."

"I think it scarcely just, Captain Mowbray," said Gertrude; "to charge those with *idolatry* who assent to the doctrine of salvation through Christ."

"It is not necessary to deny Christ to be an idolater;" quietly replied Captain Mowbray. "Another Christian writer, of our day, has justly remarked, 'The children of Israel never thought of renouncing God, when they persuaded Aaron to make the golden calf. (See Exod. xxxii. 4, and 1 Kings xii. 28.) In both instances, the idol was not set up as a *rival* to God, but under the pretence of being a *help*—a stepping-stone—to His service, and yet how great was the sin committed,' and the woe denounced."

Lady Gertrude felt this to be unanswerable; evading it, she asked, "But if what you call vain ceremonies, really tend to deepen spiritual devotion

in those who do not think them vain; or to elevate the mind to a higher degree of piety, why, Captain Mowbray, should you deem them superstitious?"

"Because, they are so directly opposed to the spirit of the Gospel," replied her companion, "that it is a delusion to suppose they can really, tend either to spiritualize the soul, or elevate the mind. Were it as you say, would not the apostles have recommended such aids, instead of denouncing them as 'vain things, which perish in the using?' How great is the contrast between *their* simple worship of the heart, *their* sublime but simple sacraments, and those which have in later times debased the sanctuary of God. The sacramental supper of the Lord, instituted by Himself in the 'upper guest-chamber' of an ordinary house; the sacrament of baptism, in its apostolic form, the 'mere simple effusion of water in the name of the Trinity.' Oh! how impressive were these in their touching simplicity! How unlike the gorgeous rituals, and dramatic paraphernalia of the Church of Rome! From such poor, spurious substitutes of spiritual worship did the blessed Reformers, whom you so unjustly defame, purge our Anglican Church. And will *you*, Lady Gertrude, help to bring back the incongruous ceremonies and superstitions of the dark ages, which found no place in the Church of the apostles? What have we to do with an 'altar,' when there is 'no more sacrifice for sin?'

For what purpose do we raise a rood screen, that the chancel should be separated from the people, when earth has now no 'holy of holies,' because our great High Priest is passed into the heavens? Tell me, Lady Gertrude, can you find throughout the New Testament, one single passage to justify these appointments, or one example, among the early disciples of our Lord, to warrant such fruitless adjuncts to piety? So far from it, the very language of St. Paul, I think, emphatically denounces them, as 'beggarly elements,' when addressing the 'foolish Galatians,' who were beginning, even then, to corrupt the religion of Christ, by a formal observance of 'days and months, and times and years;' inducing an apprehension, lest he 'had bestowed labour on them in vain.' 'Where is the place of my rest? saith the Lord Jehovah,' to the idolatrous Israelites; 'for all these things hath my hand made, and all these things have been;' but 'unto this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word.' And if the great preacher of the Gentiles, when planting the infant Church of his converts, avoided all specific detail in the mere structure of its outward form, his sole injunction on this ground, 'Let all things be done decently and in order;' surely, it is unworthy of the ministers of any apostolic Church, to bestow one serious thought, on 'the changes of hangings for

the altar,' to the piscina and sedilia, and 'open tabernacle work of appropriate pattern,' all so immeasurably beneath the office of one, set apart, for the great work of administering to the souls of men, as 'ambassadors of Christ.' Truly, 'the power, not the form of godliness, is the glory of the Gospel!' It is truths such as these, that our Bible and Reformation Societies, aim to set forth to the ignorant, or falsely taught; through the circulation of the holy Scriptures, in their own pure sense and language; and until these become the standard of faith, and all essential doctrines, so long must there unhappily remain divisions and dissensions, devastating the fair heritage of Christianity, and scattering the people of God, who ought rather to be, of 'one fold, under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ.' It is the Bible alone, which, with the blessing and grace of God, can 'convince of sin,' and restore the Christian Church to a 'unity of spirit,' a bond of peace, and to righteousness of life. Now, Lady Gertrude," added Captain Mowbray, smiling, "will you go with me to the *Reformation meeting?*"

CHAPTER XIV.

“Your pardon, sir,
But sure this lack of Christian charity
Looks not like Christian truth.”

ON the morning after the conversation which closed our last chapter, the Lady Gertrude Austyn was, apparently, engaged in painting a group of flowers ; but, although the pencil was in her hand, her mind was evidently abstracted from her occupation, and she sat so deeply lost in thought, that Captain Mowbray, who had been writing at a table nearly opposite to her, could not but observe it, and he said, half playfully, “What can you be thinking of, Lady Gertrude, to make you look so very serious ?”

She looked up with a smile, “High treason against you, perhaps, Captain Mowbray. I was, however, in truth, thinking how strangely good men differ in their views of religious truth, and in the means which

most tend to its advancement. I wish you would talk to Mr. Grey; perhaps, after all, you may meet in essentials, although so widely differing in minor points."

"I have often talked to Mr. Grey, Lady Gertrude," replied Captain Mowbray, "and of him, would I most warn you, of all others."

Gertrude looked up in unaffected wonderment, but after a few moments' reflection, she shook her head, and archly said, "Captain Mowbray, tell me why is it, that because two parties, conscientiously, deriving their religion from the same source; uniting in the essential doctrines of the Christian faith; but who, in minor opinions, diverge from each other, to meet, after all, at the same point of termination; why is it, that such deadly feud should rankle towards each other, quarrelling on the ground of their minor differences?"

"That is rather a strong conclusion," replied Captain Mowbray, "and I trust, one founded upon the rule of exception."

"It is a true bill, I tell you," said Gertrude, laughing, "proved by witnesses, animate and inanimate, in the cause of Church *versus* Church. Public meetings, private parties, pamphlets, and pulpits, all ring the changes of abuse and vituperation, one against the other. Evangelical and Dissenter, counsel for the plaintiff; Roman Catholic and Tractarian, counsel for

the defendant ; and like a suit, thrown into the High Court of Chancery, the verdict is likely to stand over through many a session yet, until every inch of debatable ground has been filtered through the subtle pores of controversy ; and then, with nothing left to quarrel for, the angry disputants will come to terms of amicable compromise, without fine or imprisonment on either side."

"Never can this be, fair lady," replied Captain Mowbray, "until *truth*, be mutually accepted as umpire ; and then, indeed, she may unite, what her antagonistic principle must ever separate. Would that I could say, neither party have afforded just grounds for your accusation, on the score of mutual recrimination ; but it is, alas ! too true, that a 'righteous zeal' often gives place to angry passions on the one hand ; and, on the other ; justice and charity, are sacrificed, to taunt and acrimony ; until a fair strife has become an unholy struggle, and an honest controversy is converted into hostile contention. The plaintiff, Lady Gertrude, sues against a *system*, not its victims ; but your defendant takes up the dispute as warring against individual religion ; and if evil tempers be chargeable to one party, unjust and slanderous imputations, may, with equal fairness, be attributed to the other."

"We need not touch further upon the tempers of our plaintiff," said Lady Gertrude, smiling, "for in

that we are perfectly agreed ; but where lies the injustice and slander of which you accuse the defendant ?”

“ It lies, principally, in the charge that the Protestant Church is actuated, solely, by bigotry and false views of the Roman Catholic faith, in a petition against its restoration within the British dominions, and that such petition is based on objections, not authorised by the Scriptures. Now, the plaintiff *proves* its authority to be the *Word of God*, and on this very proof arraigns the defendant. The case is well sustained, by abundant testimony, against the defence assumed. Prophets and apostles bear witness to the unscriptural character of the Papacy, as a system of idolatrous worship ; and our Lord Jesus Christ himself, taught directly the reverse of its essential doctrines, such as faith in the Virgin Mary, as a mediator betwixt Christ and His people!—transubstantiation in the mass, the supremacy of the Pope over Christendom, and many other grounds of dissent between the Churches at issue. Is it, therefore, *just* to charge Protestantism with heresy and falsehood ;, bigotry and personal enmity, against Roman Catholics, individually, because we, sincerely, desire to try a system of undoubted error, by a *fair challenge*, to temperate and friendly investigation, through an impartial appeal to those very Scriptures, on which *both Churches profess* to maintain their faith ?”


“The Roman Catholics do not *worship* the Virgin Mary, as a mediator, in the same sense as Christ is our intercessor ;” said Gertrude, evasively ; “they only *venerate* her, as His blessed mother ; and, surely, it is not presuming too far, to believe, that He would especially receive her prayers in our behalf.”

“They not only worship her in heaven,” replied Captain Mowbray, “but even images of herself on earth, as also those of saints and martyrs—a worship actually required as an article of faith, as you will find by reference to the synodal councils of the Roman hierarchy. The second council of Nice, for instance, ordains such worship, in these words, ‘Those who say, I bow down to images, but I do not worship them, shall be condemned as heretics by the holy father.’ And the same council declares, ‘There is no difference *whatsoever*, between the worship of the image, and the homage offered to the person whom it represents.’ All this, in opposition to the command of God, ‘Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor *bow down to them*.’ And so far from finding any sanction in the Scriptures for the worship of the Virgin Mary, the very language of Christ himself, is directly against it ; for when His disciples exclaimed, ‘Blessed is the womb that bare Thee,’ He answered, ‘Yea, rather blessed are they who hear the Word of God.’ Thus intimating, that all who, sincerely, receive the Gospel of

tholics in their calamity, without a thought of religious variance. Is *this* persecution? In the same spirit of Christian sympathy, with which we thus desire to relieve the diseased in body, do we, at any cost, distribute the 'bread of life,' to feed and renovate the perishing soul. For this does England send forth her Bibles and Bible readers, to the cabins of the Irish peasantry—to the far-off colonies of other lands—not to constrain the conscience, but to invite an impartial reception of the Word of God, and to proclaim through the Gospel, the glad tidings of that free salvation in Christ Jesus, which is offered to all, 'without money, and without price.' Is *this* persecution, and 'tyranny,' and 'bitter enmity?' Again, look at England, and tell me, is there a county or town in all her borders, where you will not see a Roman Catholic church, or chapel, raised in the midst of our own; the worshippers as free in one, as in the other, to pray according to their faith, without restraint or fear? and with like liberty, convents and monastic seminaries find place upon the British soil, unfettered and unmolested. If *this* be persecution, I know not the meaning of the word freedom?"

Lady Gertrude, with one of her sweet ingenuous smiles, replied, "In you, Captain Mowbray, the plaintiff has, doubtless, a first-rate special pleader; in all this, I must acknowledge, you have but spoken the truth."

“And now,” asked Captain Mowbray, “what is the reverse side? Even in our own sister country, Ireland; Protestant Bibles are prohibited, Bible readers denounced, Catholics themselves threatened with the priestly ban, if known to possess the one, or to harbour the other. You have lived long in Italy, dear Lady Gertrude, and with Rome you are familiar. Are Protestants free to erect churches, or chapels, or schools, or colleges, within the Papal dominions? Have Protestant worshippers, one fitting place within the Papal city, where they may meet in prayer, according to their faith? What freedom, then, or even religious toleration is allowed to those, who give so generously, and claim so little in return? While, if England only appeals against an unfair usurpation of her rights, or the abuse of religious privileges, so nobly chartered to Roman Catholics, the whole hierarchy of Rome, rings with the war cry of *persecution*! And, alas! there are those who call themselves the sons of the Anglican Church, whose voices have re-echoed the taunt; and because warned against an approximation to idolatrous forms, which begin by bowing to a cross, and end in worshipping images made with hands; they, too, shelter themselves behind the Roman banner, and join in the clamour raised against the very faith which they have professed; because, like sullen school-boys, they have received a slight check from their master’s rod, and so



turn round and call him tyrant. We might tell of histories, registered in a court where best they will be judged, of Inquisition cruelties,—of the unsparing sword of St. Bartholomew;—of the fires which consumed our martyred Reformers, and, *then*, indeed, talk of *persecution*. But these are the histories of years gone by; such as, we may well pray God may never again be recorded among the annals of Christendom; rather would we forget the injuries recorded; retaining only a memory of the lessons they have so solemnly taught us, to press on for the holier and far nobler deeds, of converting, not resenting, error, by propagating throughout the length and breadth of the earth, the blessed Gospel of righteousness and salvation. But while thus we desire to destroy a system, which has proved so fatally destructive of both religion and peace, earnestly would we draw within the hallowed fellowship of a common fraternity every heart in Christendom, to aid in the glorious work of its demolition. And there *are* hearts, Lady Gertrude, among our Roman Catholic brethren, worthy to rank on the side of a holy and religious cause; hearts, which would do honour to the conquest of truth over error, if with a candid and unprejudiced judgment, they would but throw off the fetters of superstition, and bring faith, like a little child, to learn the sacred Scriptures of God's inspired apostles, as they themselves learnt the truth

from the sublime lessons of Jesus Christ! Then, might many a Protestant look up to such converts, and learn practical religion from examples worthy of imitation; Protestants, who, with the full light of the Gospel in their path, turn away into 'darkness more dark' than ignorance, living a prayerless, worldly life, despisers of those holy precepts on which they profess to ground their faith; while, on the other hand, many ignorant of such precepts, and blinded by a superstitious homage to a power, which they believe to be of God, are deeply earnest in their self-denying, and often painfully austere obedience; and so far as man has right to judge them, are living fully up to the light of the faith which is in them, imbibed from childhood, through education and example."

Lady Gertrude remained for a moment, deeply thinking of some reminiscences, associated with remarks addressed to her, and yet not wholly connected with them. At length she said, timidly looking up, with a heightened colour, "Captain Mowbray, I should like to ask you a question, and yet, I fear, it may be too personal a one, to do so without leading you to think me overbold, and presuming too much on your indulgence."

"The Lady Gertrude can ask me nothing which may be so misconstrued;" replied Captain Mowbray, smiling; while inwardly he thought that never had

he looked upon a face, less expressive of anything bold or unwomanly.

“If, then, as you confess, that all honour is due to those, who are upright in their religious principles, however erring they may be in creed, why is it,” asked Gertrude, “that you, Captain Mowbray, look less favourably, on one who differs nothing from yourself, in either Church or creed, but only in the discipline of that Church, and in the externals by which such creed is carried out? Do I presume too far in saying, that I deeply regret to see coldness and mistrust in your manner, at least, towards such a man as Mr. Grey, whose character I have known long and intimately: and who, I do believe, can scarcely be surpassed, in the constant exercise of high moral principles, governed by a deep and holy piety, as consistent in its practical influence upon himself, as it is exemplary, to all within the province of his pastoral care; and this, perhaps, can be said of few, let their creed be what it may. A Roman Catholic of equal worth, would, by your own confession, merit your sympathy and regard; and yet, you refuse fellowship with one, alienated from such esteem, by far less essential difference of religious opinion. Shall I then make you very angry, if I ask, is not this the effect of *prejudice*?”


Captain Mowbray looked pained, and for a moment felt at a loss for a reply. He fixed a searching

glance on the countenance of Gertrude, but all there was open as daylight. At length he answered, "I think, Mr. Grey can lay no claim to the same ground of defence as a Roman Catholic, Lady Gertrude. He was not nurtured in error, and therefore is not ignorant of the truths which he has abandoned. Whatever may be his own infatuation, he cannot be wholly deceived, while deceiving others."

"That sounds a grave charge, indeed," said Gertrude, reddening with something like indignation. "Mr. Grey is, I am persuaded, wholly incapable of deception."

"Lady Gertrude, tell me honestly, has he never taught *you* that, in some cases, deception, prevarication, and even falsehood itself, may be justified, if used only as a means to accomplish a holy end?"

"I do not know, exactly, what you mean," replied Gertrude, again blushing, and with some hesitation. "In the present depressed state of our holy Church, Mr. Grey, may feel compelled, to exercise great caution and reserve ; lest seceders, like ravenous birds of prey, should devour the good seed he aims to scatter, before it can take root within the soil, which as a faithful husbandman of the Church, he labours so incessantly to guard. With untiring patience, and unwearied toil, he is ever watching at his anxious post ; and if needs be, that snares must be laid down to contravene the spoiler, and preserve the spoils,



surely the labourer does well to use them, although he will choose such means, only as a last resource. In all such legitimate *espionnage*, he but acts upon the authority of the Fathers, who deemed it no dishonesty to exercise this holy caution, in times less fraught with dangers than our own."

Captain Mowbray drew a deep sigh, and remained silent for some minutes. Then with evident emotion, as if reluctant to give pain, and yet convinced that it was his duty, faithfully, to protest against the principle of so perilous a theory, he said, "Dear Lady Gertrude, you think me prejudiced and unjust; and were I influenced, only, by selfish motives, I might passively endure the charge, however painful, as coming from you. But I cannot know you misled by so unrighteous a system, without an earnest desire to undeceive a young, and naturally, a most ingenuous mind. That Mr. Grey is acting conscientiously, according to his estimate of conscience, I do not doubt; and I could forgive him, even, his apostasy from our Protestant Church of England, did he openly avow his perversion from its Protestantism."

Gertrude started with undisguised surprise. "He an *apostate*! Captain Mowbray? The Church of England has not a more faithful, zealous, holy son and servant, than Mr. Grey. Avoiding the errors of Papacy; and equally eschewing the latitudinarian principles of the Reformers; he has embraced the

doctrines and discipline of the primitive Fathers; seeking, with devoted zeal, to restore our holy Church to its ancient purity and power. But Mr. Grey is no separatist from her communion. Rather does he seek to reunite into one catholic Christendom the Churches of Rome and England, which never should have been severed, as now they are."

"I believe all that you say of him, as truly as you assert it;" quietly replied Captain Mowbray; "but the union he seeks to restore would be, a total abolition of the *Protestant Church*."

"None but a Roman Catholic could desire this," retorted Gertrude, pettishly.

"Are you *sure* that Mr. Grey is not one?" asked Captain Mowbray, looking steadily at his companion.

"I am sure that your suspicions are cruelly unjust; and most unworthy of Captain Mowbray, for a moment to entertain;" replied Gertrude, now thoroughly irritated.

Her opponent reddened: but moved by a high sense of Christian duty, he soon regained his equanimity, and mildly said, "You must forgive me, if I feel impelled to speak more plainly, by the deep interest I take in your spiritual welfare. I have a dear and only sister, of whom you are the most intimate friend; and can you pardon me, if for her sake, subserviently to yet holier motives, I would be equally *the friend* of both. Had you father, or a brother,

near you, I should not presume to speak thus boldly what I suspect and fear."

Gertrude felt angry : nevertheless, she was touched by the kindness which it was impossible to misunderstand, and replied, "Say what you will, Captain Mowbray, I cannot doubt your motive ; but, of course, I must be left at liberty to credit only, what my judgment shall approve."

Smiling at this last remark, Captain Mowbray said, "If you can patiently listen to a history, in which, I must be sadly egotistical, as linked to the more prominent characters ; you shall be at liberty to erase from its pages, every part, which may appear piratical and unworthy of credit. Time was, Lady Gertrude, when we were a happy and most united family. My dear father became greatly attached to a man, of considerable influence in the county, the adjoining property of whose estate, Sir Willis purchased ; and there during my boyish years we lived. I do not mention my father's friend by name, for it is one associated with the most painful circumstances, which have, however, little to do with my present detail. He was a very high professor of religion, which, just at the period of which I speak, had revived throughout the country, and he spared neither expense nor trouble, in evangelizing our parish and neighbourhood, if I may so express myself. Through his interest, the living was presented to a most elo-

quent preacher of the same school, who, I believe, well merited the esteem, which was universally rendered him ; but, apart from his influence, religious fervour became throughout the circle of our little world a prevailing *fashion*—with sorrow, not with irreverence do I say so. Mothers sent their willing daughters to schools, and meetings, and village lectures ; where young men assembled more as a pastime, I fear, than to take any useful part in the professed objects of such gatherings. Evening parties were frequent for sacred music, and sacred readings ; and a melancholy admixture they exhibited, of the world's dissipation and religious *profession*,—I might in many cases say, religious *profanation*. Well do I remember those *réunions*, and the incongruity which, even then, boy as I was, struck painfully on my feelings ; between the worldliness displayed one hour, and the worldliness denounced the next ; between the dresses, and the discussions ; the bitter criticisms, and the subjects criticised. It was a sort of religious masquerade ; although, some mingled in its motley group, unmasked and unsuspecting ; led by pure and holy motives, to gather wisdom, or to teach it. One family, alone, soon absented themselves from these meetings ; seldom taking part in the more public affairs of our community ; and these were, therefore, charged with having little spiritual Christianity ; but *they were*, in truth, doers of the Word, not hearers

only ; and ever blessed be the memory of a providential accident, as it proved, that led to an intimacy, which, from my heart, I believe, saved me from infidelity, as an escape from the Antinomian practices, which were spreading like leaven, through the circle around me ; or from the hypocrisy,—delusion it may have been—from which my soul, happily, revolted. My father's friend, as I have said before, had been the great mover of all this excitement, and by that man, was my father deceived and injured, even while reposing in him, the most unlimited confidence. Sir Willis had been led into all the prevailing enthusiasm ; but if his judgment erred in, blindly, mistaking tinsel for gold ; his own sincerity, and earnest desire after holiness, could never, for a moment, be doubted by those who, really, knew him. But, alas ! as is too often the case, he saw religion, or rather its name, dishonoured ; and from that hour, he has condemned everything, called evangelical, but as another term for fraud and hypocrisy, or the mere delusions of a spurious faith, in which words, not works, are the fruits. Thus embittered, my poor father sold his estate for half its value, and we left, for ever, the home of our happy childhood. Sir Willis then came to London, just as the Oxford Tracts turned the current of popular opinions to the extreme reverse ; was introduced to one of their chief supporters, now a Roman Catholic priest, embraced their views, and

re-entered the world, violently opposed to what, he deemed 'Puritan principles.' Shortly after this, he removed to Italy, taking with him, as domestic chaplain, and tutor to my brother, your friend Mr. Grey. These circumstances, inevitably, produced some estrangement between my father and myself, while daily becoming more opposed to each other in our religious views; and, deeply, did I feel the trial of such alienation, especially when, for the first time, I was left alone in England, without one family tie remaining to me, of a once happy home. I had entered the Guards, and was then in my twentieth year; an age, when sorrow takes no deep root within the heart, however it may temper its wild buoyancy of hope. Not long after the departure of my family, I visited Dover; and there again, renewed my intimacy with the Russell family, who were passing a summer among its beautiful cliffs; and thus, once more, I enjoyed the advice and society of the venerable guide of my earlier years, whom I must ever consider, humanly speaking, as the guardian of my soul's faith; for it was in the bosom of his domestic circle, that I had first learnt to appreciate, the 'beauty of holiness,' practically manifested, when so much of its counterfeit had been exhibited around me; and I found it again, like a halo, which drew me within an atmosphere of light, to see the reality of pure religion in all its calm and dignified happiness.

Mr. Russell was, in principles, what was then, and still is, called evangelical. The Scriptures were the sole ground of his faith; by their precepts was his own life governed, and his children trained to prove their religion by the effects which it produced upon their tempers, their pursuits, and their affections. It was a beautiful sight, to witness the almost patriarchal simplicity of that little household. The master's word was law, both with children and servants; but it was a law of such perfect union of love and reverence, that it hallowed all that it enforced. Mrs. Russell, in her character of wife, was like an ivy clinging to a stately oak; and so devotedly, did she rest her earthly trust on the dear support, which in sunshine and in cloud sustained her, that no one could look upon the two, without feeling a hope, that the protecting tree might outlive the feebler plant. And so it was. The ivy faded first away—the wife and mother is at rest. Two twin-like girls were as sunbeams in the dwelling. Always earnest in their serious duties; cheerful even to playfulness in their lighter ones. They ‘loved not the world, neither the things of the world;’ their happiness lay in the rich blessings of a sanctified home, and their peace was ‘of God.’ Nevertheless, no human being ever came within the range of their active benevolence without meeting a responsive sympathy, whether sorrow or joy claimed it, to soothe the one, or to en-

hance the other. They were never heard to speak harshly of others, whose faults found excuse, or allowance; while their own, met with no such apology, because they felt, what was perhaps true, that few could err against so many privileges of light and knowledge, as themselves, hedged round as they had ever been, by the pious precepts and examples of parents, whose whole aim was to serve God in every relative duty. The eldest of these girls, married early, and is now, in herself, the example of a household, sustaining a high position, with meekness and dignity. The younger, died of an epidemic fever; but her memory must ever live in the hearts of those who knew her." Here Captain Mowbray paused a little while, with a sigh which, perhaps, told that in his own heart, at least, her memory was cherished. He soon, however, resumed his detail, in which his companion evidently felt deep interest. "Forgive this little episode, Lady Gertrude," he said; "it is one of those bright spots in the perspective of my life's history, on which I, sometimes, love to linger. I have said little of my sister Clara, for you know her even more intimately than I now do; but you did *not* know her the guileless, merry hearted, affectionate girl, which she was up to the time of leaving England. She was not clever, as many others of her age and education; anxious to oblige, her mind was, perhaps, too easily led. Affection could mould

her, to almost anything, not in itself, wrong or unprincipled. She was like a tendril, always clinging to the strength of another, and so extremely amiable, that she won the love of all who knew her. Arthur, in many respects resembled her; and being so nearly of the same age, their studies were generally pursued together. And now of your friend Mr. Grey. A year after my father had left England, I joined them all at Milan. Mr. Grey, had even then, obtained an influence over the whole family which was quite extraordinary. I was, myself, greatly fascinated with his powers of mind, his extensive learning, and his unvarying gentleness of manner, which so rarely accompanies that firmness of mind and dignity of deportment, for which he was, and is still, I think, peculiarly eminent. Throughout our household, Mr. Grey was paramount. His will was never contradicted; he held the reins of government, without a rival in command; but with such consummate judgment and real delicacy, that none, but himself, were aware how completely he led them. His *motives* I have never doubted; they were, I believe, sincere and conscientious; but himself an avowed disciple of the Tractarian party at Oxford, his teaching became daily more tinctured, with what, he termed Anglo-Catholic views; while it was evident, that he was fast approximating to those of the Romish Church. My father, embittered against evangelical

doctrines, became a violent opposer of the Reformation itself; and without any serious investigation, acting, solely, upon the impulse of an irritated mind, he upheld every precept, and sentiment, and form of worship, advocated by his chaplain; however tending to subvert the very principles of Protestantism, which he still professed to maintain. My dear mother had never taken much part in religious discussions; perhaps, I had rather she had done so, than have remained neutral, on a subject of so much individual importance; but the views of Mr. Grey suited her state of mind. She frequently remarked, that there was so much order in his religion, one thing never interfered with another; it had its own time and place; without intruding upon the more ordinary pursuits of life; which she thought, was far better than believing nothing, doing nothing, without a text of Scripture, to prove or reprove. My brother and sister, also, soon became greatly attached to their gentle teacher; imbibing his opinions without a question of their soundness. Clara knelt before a crucifix at her devotions; her prayers were mostly extracts from the breviary, while the Holy Scriptures, although not *prohibited*, were to be read with limitation, and received only, as interpreted by the Church. All this deeply distressed me, and I combated, to the utmost, errors which must inevitably tend to idolatrous worship, but at length I

was silenced, by my father's prohibition against any further interference with my brother and sister, and well I knew its source. I then argued with Mr. Grey himself, but it was vain to urge the Scriptures against 'the fathers' and their 'traditions.' Instead of these being *subservient* witnesses to the truth, the inspiration of Holy Writ was, in fact, no more than a 'trumpet giving an uncertain sound, without them. Thus all were against me: my father, displeased and irritated, whenever I attempted to justify my opinions, by reference to the Word of God. Clara was still affectionate, but reserved; poor Arthur seldom permitted to be with me, evidently evaded all controversy, 'obedience to the Church,' being ever the plea of resisting persuasion or explanation. My only resource was now to leave them again, which I did with a sorrowful heart, and returned to England, leaving them on their way to Florence, where, I believe, they first had the pleasure of meeting you."

Lady Gertrude had listened to the details of Captain Mowbray with intense interest, her countenance varying with every shade of his history. "I can quite understand how much you have suffered, Captain Mowbray," she said, "yet I see no ground for condemnation against Mr. Grey, in anything you have advanced. He has but acted strictly to the letter of his own deeply-rooted convictions; but,

widely differing as you do from each other, in your views of what really constitutes the apostolic Church, it is impossible you can fairly judge him, even in essentials, and yet both of you be equally honest in motive and opinion."

Captain Mowbray reddened, but simply answered, "An honest motive needs no disguise, my dear Lady Gertrude. If Mr. Grey be honestly a Roman Catholic in faith, let him not conceal it under the name of Anglo-Catholic, professing to be a Protestant Churchman. If honestly the latter, let him adhere to Protestant principles, and, as a minister of God, abide by the articles and creeds by which, in the name of God, he was solemnly consecrated a clergyman of the established *Protestant Church of England*. I say not this without just ground of painful suspicion."

"But *why*, Captain Mowbray," said Gertrude, "should you for a moment think him a Roman Catholic, unless it is, because he cannot agree with the Puritan party of the Church? No man can labour more disinterestedly to restore the discipline and principles of the holy *apostolic* Church of England, to primitive order, although, like good Archbishop Laud, and others of the same views, he cannot subscribe to the fatal innovations, introduced by the Reformers, falsely so called."

"Bear with me yet a little," replied Captain

Mowbray, "while I give you the sequel of my history. A few days only after I was aware of my father's return to England, I received a letter from my brother, which determined me, at whatever sacrifice of selfish feeling, immediately to join him here ; for I was well aware that if expected, my visit might be altogether prohibited. I found him, as you know, much more dangerously ill than I, in the least, expected. But I soon became convinced that the state of his mind militated more against his recovery than inveteracy of disease. He is disturbed with fears, haunted by remembrance of sin, in penance for which, he has been taught, not only to fast far beyond his strength to bear, but to pass whole nights upon the bare floor, that such discipline might bring his soul down to holier subjection and repentance ; and yet, with all such miserable subterfuges of conscience, he feels that real remission of sin is far from him as ever. He confesses again and again to Mr. Grey, the keeper of his soul, and as often are penances applied, and absolution pronounced, yet inwardly he has no sense of pardon from God. He flies to outward means, depending upon their efficacy, but still he finds them of no avail to give him peace. His reading for some time past has been confined to dark histories of monastic life, biographies of saints and martyrs who have lived recluses, and died under self-imposed sufferings, which are recorded for imita-

tion, not only as claims to salvation, but as obtaining a comparative magnitude of glory in heaven ! Poor Arthur has aimed at a measure of such sanctity, and because his bodily strength has failed at the very threshold of his arduous, but earnestly-desired martyrdom, he has mistaken weakness for spiritual insubordination, or to some unrepented, unabsolved offence within his unconscious soul. And this is the pupil of Mr. Grey ! Of Clara you may know more than I do, and yet I should do you injustice, did I believe you to be aware of the *extent* of Mr. Grey's influence over her plastic mind. I have reason to fear that she is, even now, secretly indulging a wish to enter a convent, with a view of becoming a novice, for which she fancies that she has a strong vocation. I say not that the wish *originated* in Mr. Grey, but it is the result of his instructions, and one which he has not discouraged."

"Oh, Captain Mowbray !" exclaimed Gertrude, greatly excited, "is it possible that you can for a moment credit so slanderous an imputation ? I declare to you, that never have I heard Clara breathe a wish to take the veil, or even to enter a convent. Report has misled you, by confounding the "Sisters of Mercy," at Rosenfield, with a conventual community ; for it is quite true that Clara, with a pious yearning for the contemplative life, has expressed a desire to become one of that devoted sisterhood, and

with such, who holds any right to interfere? Mr. Grey may have encouraged her in so holy a purpose, without any infringement on Catholic principles, the establishment of St. Anne's being strictly in accordance with those of the Anglican Church; call it Protestant, if you will, only allow others, as well as yourself, to set a limit to the boundary of Protestantism, according to the conscience of those who judge it by Catholic articles of faith, and the rubrical order of the Book of Common Prayer. As regards your poor brother, his state of health may render him morbidly sensitive, and lead him greatly to exaggerate the instructions and views of his tutor, it is therefore unjust in the extreme, to charge the results of physical infirmity upon his friend and spiritual adviser."

The impulsive temper of Lady Gertrude was now thoroughly roused, and, in spite of her efforts to control it, tears filled her eyes, and she looked down in silence to hide them. Captain Mowbray looked at her with sympathy and sorrow, while inwardly he prayed that she might be saved from snares already spread around her. "Lady Gertrude," he said, kindly, "I see that I have pained you, for I will not say *offended* you; nevertheless you must forgive the importunity with which I desire, if possible, to convince you of an infatuation, which must imperil your happiness, here and hereafter. I will not, how-

ever, at present, urge you further upon these painful subjects ; I will but add a few remarks, for your earnest and candid attention, when alone with your God, that, with His blessing, your own conscience may apply them more ably than any argument of mine can do, to that honest investigation of truth which, I am sure, you will not lightly refuse to seek. You know that at the Reformation the Anglican Church separated altogether from the Papal hierarchy. She protested against the assumed powers of that hierarchy, against the idolatry of its system, and all those surreptitious forms of worship, which in themselves were idolatrous. She protested against monasteries, and monastic austerities, as subversive of Christian usefulness, and contrary to apostolic examples ; also, against the invocation of saints, prayers for the dead, the use of the cross, and image worship. This protest swept from our Church these and many other abuses, because directly opposed to the Word of God, and inconsistent with the pure faith of revealed religion, as taught by Christ himself, and practised by those holy apostles who were inspired by God, so also to teach the universal Church on earth. This protest, then, against the Papacy and its essential doctrines, became the very bulwark of our Church, when reformed and remodelled upon the principles of the Gospel dispensation, it was established throughout the British dominions as the

Protestant Church of England. Articles of faith, consistent with that protest, were framed and registered; and upon these, a Liturgy and other formularies of public worship were modelled, to be the appointed rituals of the Protestant Church throughout Great Britain and her dependencies. Now, Lady Gertrude, to these Thirty-nine Articles of faith, which embody all the doctrinal truths of Holy Scripture, every ordained minister of the Anglican Church must solemnly, and upon oath, subscribe. Read them over carefully, comparing each one with the Word of God, and then let your own unbiassed conscience answer, as before God, whether any man, so ordained and sworn, can honestly teach the views which my brother, my sister, and, may I not say, which *you* have imbibed from Mr. Grey? Can he, without awful perjury and breach of faith, as a *professed Protestant clergyman of the Church of England*, teach, and admit the greater part of Roman Catholic doctrines? while, on the other hand, he denounces the principles of Protestantism as ‘*heresy*,’ and tells you that we (*Protestants*) must ‘recede more and more from the principles of the English Reformation;’* that ‘*Scripture is not, on Anglican principles, the rule of faith!*’† that ‘our Articles are the offspring of an uncatholic age.’‡ Is it con-

* British Critic, July, 1841.

† Tracts for the Times, No. 90.

‡ Ibid.

sistent with the vows of his solemn consecration to the Protestant Church, thus to set at defiance the very articles to which, upon oath, he subscribed? Has he not, for some time past, confined your own reading, almost exclusively to Roman Catholic writings? encouraging you in the use of prayers from the Roman missal or breviary? Has he not recommended the invocation of saints, adoration of the Virgin Mary, and many other unscriptural aids to worship, all of which are absolutely prohibited by the Church of which Mr. Grey *professes* himself a minister, and to whose *Protestantism* he has vowed allegiance? Think of these things, Lady Gertrude, and then tell me, if the most charitable conclusion be not, that he is in heart and faith a *Roman Catholic*, probably of the Jesuit order, acting upon the well-known subtle principle, that he may righteously *profess* to be the reverse, as a deception sanctified by the end of winning proselytes to the Papacy, under the name of Anglo-Catholic Christendom—a motive which would not only justify the most fraudulent practices, but render their perpetration an object of peculiar estimation among the superiors of his own Church, entitled to reward here and hereafter.”

“I know nothing of the Articles you speak of,” exclaimed Gertrude, impatiently; “and if I read them, I might not comprehend their real meaning;

but I do know, that Mr. Grey is incapable of such base treachery, and it is wholly unworthy of you, Captain Mowbray, to entertain such a cruel suspicion."

"If thus, indeed, you think I wrong him," quietly replied Captain Mowbray, "you will find, upon a fair and candid investigation of what I have advanced, that you are thrown upon a yet more painful alternative, that if *not* a Roman Catholic, then he is a wilfully perjured and dishonoured Protestant! In either case, he is no fit guide for the members of a Christian family, themselves holding faithful allegiance, I trust, to the Reformed or Protestant Church. But, to remind you of a yet deeper ground of suspicion, what have been the effects of his fatal influence over the mind of Mr. Willoughby? Celibacy of the clergy is *not* required in the Protestant Church, for nowhere is it commanded by the Word of God. But it *is* so in the Church of Rome. Why, then, has Mr. Grey enforced it upon that unhappy young man, even at the sacrifice of one of the most binding engagements of social life, which no man of moral or religious principles would have revoked, had he not been under the powerful agency of a '*strong delusion*,' evidently deceived by one calling himself a Protestant, while urging upon his unconscious victim the vows of a Roman Catholic priest?"

"Allow me to say, Captain Mowbray," said Ger-

trude, greatly irritated, "that Mr. Willoughby acted in this matter wholly as a free agent. Inwardly moved to an exclusive dedication of himself to the service of our holy Anglican Church, Ernest Willoughby is set apart, by a vow, voluntarily and solemnly resolved, at his ordination to the priesthood of that Church, enforced by no influence subordinate to the inspired precepts of St. Paul himself, and the examples of many devoted servants and ministers of God, in this and every age of Christendom."

"St. Paul's advice was not an arbitrary law," replied Captain Mowbray, "for he confessed that he spake on this matter by *permission* only, *not* by command; it was therefore to be received with limitation; and so far from being imperative or *inspired*, the reverse is far more *generally* advocated by the voice of Holy Scripture, and by the Protestant Church at large, of every sect and country. But, granting that the authority of St. Paul's opinion might, in many cases, legitimately have weight upon the conscience, the apostle himself would have been the very last to sanction a breach of faith, or to urge a vow cancelling that faith, upon any plea short of a *Divine command*. Had Mr. Willoughby stood alone in the sacrifice he offered, he might have been free as air, to vow as he felt disposed, and of his motive no man would have had right to judge; but, nothing can *justify* the breach of a solemn compact, involving a

ruin so complete, as the wreck of every earthly hope, in the guileless, trusting heart of that noble girl, who reposed her happiness upon the very faith which has been so needlessly perjured under the name of *piety*. I have not the privilege of personally knowing either of the parties concerned, but, from my inmost heart, I pity them; ay, even poor Willoughby himself, of whose mental sufferings I have heard too much, to believe him voluntarily the author of such a treacherous act,—an act, too, upon which, I hear, he builds his hope of sanctification. It ‘needs be offences must come,’ but there is a woe pronounced upon him ‘through whom the offence cometh;’ and I leave it to Mr. Grey’s own conscience to decide on whom, most justly, the ‘woe’ of this palpable offence may fall.”

“Oh, Captain Mowbray!” exclaimed Lady Gertrude, “I beseech you, say no more! Such thoughts as these sometimes weigh down my own soul, like reproving whispers from above, when the pale face of Alice Everard, in her calm and patient anguish,—for well I know her,—haunts me as a spirit, whether I wake or sleep. Next to my father, she is dearer to me than all the world beside, and yet, with a conscience unconvinced, I, too, urged on this work of sorrow, because I dared not disobey the voice of holy Church, lest its power should crush my soul for its rebellious opposition.”

"*You ! Lady Gertrude !*" said Captain Mowbray, surprised, yet deeply touched. "I knew not this ; how could I guess it ? But, be comforted, you, too, have been deceived ; and a time, perhaps, will come when you may yet redress the wrong."

"Redress it !" exclaimed Gertrude, looking up, with a flushed cheek, "would you urge me to the yet greater sin of tempting a priest of the Catholic Church sacrilegiously to abjure the vow made at its very altar ? No, no ! *that* is registered for ever, and its consequences must abide. Say no more to me, Captain Mowbray. How can I, a weak and foolish girl, comprehend the deep things of God's Word and His Church ? I can but obey those appointed to teach me, and if they err, on them, and not on me, must rest the penalty."

Lady Gertrude walked to the window to hide the tears which were fast filling her eyes, and Captain Mowbray, feeling that it would be injudicious further to argue the painful subject of Mr. Grey's real character, remained silent for some moments, and, perhaps, disappointed in the result of their discussion, but that he knew it was not in human power to convince of truth, or remove the errors of prejudice and delusion. At length he arose, and going towards Gertrude, said, in the kindest tone, "Time ever flies so speedily, when the mind is deeply engaged, that this must be my apology, for

so long an intrusion upon your time, my dear Lady Gertrude, and, I fear, that three hours have been unprofitably engaged, leaving only a painful impression upon *your* memory, at least. But, you will shake hands with me, I am sure, and forgive all that I have said, so far as it has distressed you."

Lady Gertrude turned round, and took the offered hand of her companion, with one of her sweet smiles, although scarcely yet restored to her usual cheerfulness; "I am glad you ask my pardon," she replied, "as it proves repentance, and that implies a sense of wrong, so I will say, as to a naughty child in the same predicament as yourself, that if you promise to be good for the future, and read over your lesson book with more attention before you bring me such an exercise again, I will freely forgive the past."

Captain Mowbray smiled, as he said, "I but ask pardon for the pain, which the truthfulness of my lesson has given, fair lady, without the slightest pang of conscience for the faithfulness of its translation."

"Well, then," replied Gertrude, laughing, "I must think of some greater punishment than a cross look, or pettish word. Were we in Rome, I would send you to the Inquisition, and see what you could make of your lesson there. As it is, you must abide by your High Court of Chancery, and if there's justice in law, you will be imprisoned for heresy."

"I will take advantage of a stray sunbeam, before

the fast coming cloud can totally obscure it again," said Captain Mowbray. "*Au revoir*, then, Lady Gertrude, I go to a far more tractable pupil up stairs."

"What! poor Arthur?" said Lady Gertrude, in a tone of some surprise. Then shaking her head, she added, mournfully, "Better let *him* be as he is."

Captain Mowbray simply waved his hand, as if to repudiate such a thought, and then left the room, to pass the remainder of the day by the side of his suffering brother.

Gertrude went to her room, irritated, and ill at ease. Some of the costly materials of her work lay scattered about; she gathered them up with little regard to the delicacy of their fabric, and opening a drawer, she threw them in, angrily, as if, somehow, *they* were implicated in the cause of her irritation. Her cheek was flushed, and every now and then tears started to her eyes, but they evidently arose more from vexation than sorrow; and pride struggled to overcome weakness. She sat down, and leaning her elbow on the table, was soon lost in thought, while a thousand contending reminiscences crowded together in her reverie. At length, pushing away the straggling hair from her forehead, as if suddenly recalled to a sense of the present, she murmured almost audibly, "If *he* deceive me, I will never again put faith in living being. But I do be-

lieve the very thought does him wrong. He is no Roman Catholic; it is Protestant prejudice to denounce even what is good and holy, if practised in the Romish Church; and they who are animated to deeper devotion by outward memorials of a crucified Saviour, or who exercise a greater degree of pious austerity, as an act of self-abasement, are, at once, set down as idolaters, and charged with the hypocrisy of seeming what they are not." Again she fell into a train of thought, but it was less easily reconciled, for Ernest Willoughby, pale, bowed down with bodily weakness and mental wretchedness, about to be led captive, as it were, to exile and abandonment of all that was dear to him in life, passed as a reproving spectre before her mental vision, giving practical contradiction to every motive which pleaded a righteous intention, in the tragedy of his self-abnegation; and then, she half confessed, that his melancholy history did, indeed, illustrate rather the system of Loyola than the principles of St. Paul. "Oh! Ernest and my poor Alice!" she exclaimed; "if Mr. Grey has done this as a Jesuit, what an awful delusion must the Roman Catholic religion be, that could sanction a work of such consummate hypocrisy, and call it a '*holy end*.' But I cannot believe it of him. He may have been wrong in this matter; erring in judgment, and while carried away by the enthusiasm of a mistaken zeal,

he knows not what he has done ; and yet Captain Mowbray may well ask, why, if really a Protestant, should he advocate so many of the doctrines repudiated by Protestantism ?” Tears of real sorrow now trickled down the cheek of Gertrude ; she thought of Earlswood, and again most earnestly wished she had never left it.

CHAPTER XV.

" We need not bid, for cloistered cell,
Our neighbour, and our work farewell ;
Nor strive to wind ourselves too high,
For sinful man beneath the sky.
The trivial round, the common task,
Would furnish all we ought to ask ;
Born to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us daily near to God."

KEBLE.

" HAVE you ever remotely given a hint of this to any member of your family ?" asked Mr. Grey of Clara Mowbray, as she stood before him, with the timid, reverential air of one who was confessing to a superior some secret purpose, doubtful whether it would meet with reproof or approbation.

" Never !" she replied, " not even to Arthur, lest I should involve him in what, I know, will cause great displeasure to my parents ; indeed, it is only

within the last few days that the wish, long entertained, has taken the form of a resolution. I have been reading the interesting memoirs of the Nuns of St. Angela, also Froude's Remains, which you kindly lent me, and a volume of Dr. Pusey's Sermons, all which have led me to examine the differences between the Anglo-Catholic and the Roman Catholic Churches, and I am now satisfied that the latter stands upon higher ground of faith and doctrine, while both are essentially based upon the same foundation. Judging, also, from the writings of some of our ablest theologians, Mr. Newman, Mr. Sewell, Mr. Ward, and others, I find that both parties admit the propitiatory character of the Eucharist; and 'that the power of making the body and blood of Christ is vested in the successors of the apostles.'* Both admit that 'Baptism, and not faith, is the primary instrument of justification;'† the 'cleansing efficacy of suffering,'‡ and the apostolic succession of the priesthood. Both parties use the cross, and bow to the cross, as a holy emblem of the crucifixion; all which views are denounced by the evangelical Protestant, as unscriptural, according to their very low estimate of tradition. The Anglo-Catholic freely admits that 'Rome has been,

* Froude's Remains, vol. i.

† Newman on Justification, p. 200.

‡ Ward's Few More Words.

even in her worst times, on most points, a firm and consistent witness, in act and word, for orthodox doctrine,* and that 'the Prayer-book has no claim on a layman's deference, as the teaching of the Church, which the Breviary and the Missal has not in a far greater degree.'† All these, Mr. Grey, are, I know, your own views; and believing that Rome is essentially our mother Church, you will not blame my earnest desire to be sealed at once, within her sacred pale, and like the holy sisters of St. Angela, to dedicate myself to a spiritual life, secluded from the world, and every worldly tie."

Mr. Grey felt perplexed, for this confession of Clara had taken him by surprise; but he was evidently far from displeased. "I blame you not, indeed, my daughter," he replied, "that thus you emulate the pious examples of those who have left all, and sacrificed all, for the sacramental life, apart from the distractions of earthly cares. Nevertheless, the subject is one for grave consideration and caution, and you must beware not to injure the cause you desire to sustain by any precipitate step. For the present, I would strongly urge you to say nothing of your ultimate intentions; but, as a probationary step, to join the 'Sisters of Mercy,' at Rosenfield, where you may follow out all the essential prin-

* Ward's Few More Words.

† Froude's Remains, vol. i.

ciples of the true Catholic faith, without hastily committing yourself to a life for which, after making trial of its inferior discipline, you may find that you have no vocation. And, indeed, dear Clara, you must weigh well the sacrifice which it involves, of separation for ever from the dearest ties of life, and even from all the blameless attractions of the world. But if, after a year's trial of the less stringent seclusion and discipline of the 'Home of Peace,' you still feel a pious yearning for conventual seclusion, I will then, by no means, dissuade you from it."

"Nothing will change my resolution, Mr. Grey," said Clara, "for it is heaven's own inspiration; nor do I require further consideration of a vow which will bind me to a cloistered home, where in the contemplation of spiritual things, I may be at peace. My life is now one of ceaseless persecution. Because I desire to abstract myself from worldly occupations, I am accused, as you have seen, of selfishness and disobedience; taunted by Lady Gertrude, and reproved by my mother. All this so depresses my mind, that when I most desire to do well, everything is against me."

"Say not that they are against you, Clara," said Mr. Grey, mildly; "they are but preparing you for that 'angel's life,' which can be attained only through a patient endurance of suffering for 'righteousness' sake.' Bear with your present trial; wholly conceal

from the penetration of others your state of mind and feelings ; implicitly obeying your mother, so as to divert her from suspicions, which may, perhaps, have been already awakened. Be assured, that your intentions are known to your heavenly Father, and will be richly rewarded. ‘He is leading you on,’ and will doubtless bring you to the haven where you fain would be, only be patient and cautious. I will see you again to-morrow ; in the meantime, I will seek an interview with your father, and use my utmost endeavours to convince both him and Lady Mowbray, that, under all circumstances, it may be better to leave you in England, under the charge of Miss Howard, the Mother Superior of St. Anne’s, and should they consent to such a proposal—of which I scarcely feel a doubt—I will make every arrangement for your comfort there.”

Clara, expressed herself deeply grateful to her spiritual adviser, and although she felt disappointed, that she might not, at once, openly avow her newly imbibed faith, nevertheless, she acknowledged the plan proposed would obviate many immediate difficulties, and perhaps, be the best means, of eventually accomplishing her object. She, therefore, submitted to the will of her confessor, and offered no opposition to the deception, which it involved towards her family.

Mr. Grey now rose to take his leave, once more

pressing upon Clara, the importance of abstaining from everything which could excite suspicion, as to her religious views. "The time for such restraints, will be but brief," he added, "as your father told me this morning, that Arthur must be removed to Italy, with as little delay as possible, probably within a fortnight."

"But *you* do not accompany them, I believe?" said Clara, timidly.

"No," replied Mr. Grey, "circumstances have arisen which render it probable, that I may leave England, even before them." He paused, hesitatingly, and then added, "They, however, go to Genoa for the autumn, I to Rome, and, in *confidence*, I may tell you, that I shall return no more to this country."

Clara, who had not the remotest idea, that Mr. Grey contemplated a permanent removal to Italy, was inexpressibly surprised. "Have you then accepted another chaplaincy abroad?" she asked. "If such be the case, oh! why do you desert poor Arthur, who loves you so devotedly?"

"I have accepted no chaplaincy, Clara, in Italy or elsewhere," said Mr. Grey, "but pressing affairs claim my presence at Rome, which, even for Arthur's sake, must not be delayed; but, on this ground, I could almost have wished you to go with him, for I fear your elder brother's influence over *his* sickly mind."

“Then will I cheerfully do so, Mr. Grey; I care little where I go, if the Church requires my services; but shall I *never* see you again?” The voice of Clara faltered as she asked this, and she turned pale as death. Mr. Grey looked at her, as if to read her very soul, while with downcast eyes, she stood before him, more like a marble statue, than a living being. He shook his head, a faint flush overspread his countenance, and with a deep sigh, he thought of her with pity and surprise.

“No, no, Clara,” at length he suddenly exclaimed, “you must remain in England; but it shall be my care, to arrange everything with Miss Howard, for your comfort, before I go; in a few months, when of age, and legally entitled to act independently of your natural guardians, it may, indeed, be for your happiness, to take the veil, as, in your soul, you seem directed to do. And now for the present farewell. I shall see you soon again.” He kindly, and with marked respect, took her hand, while she looked, rather than spoke, her responsive adieu. Another moment, Mr. Grey was gone, and Clara sat down and wept!

She had, for the first time, now confessed her entire conversion to the Church of Rome. The effect of her confession had agitated her, so unexpectedly had the avowal been met, with encouragement, rather than opposition, from the being whom


she most desired to please. And yet, the effort made, and her resolution received without a word of rebuke, a vague, strange dread, now seemed to steal over her, as to what the vow she contemplated, with so much ardent imagination, might in reality cost her, when too late to retrieve the fatal step, should it ever be repented. All this rose within her soul like a shadow of prophetic warning, and she almost perversely wished, that Mr. Grey had combated altogether, against the sacrifice which she had, with so much pride of heart, offered to the shrine of Rome's imposing worship. Whether her bitter weeping came from a deeper source than these conflicting feelings of hope and fear, working within a mind, naturally inclined to superstition, we cannot tell. The secret of her tears, lay within her own heart, and we know not, that it has ever been revealed.

Early on the following morning, the Lady Gertrude received a note from Mr. Grey, enclosing one addressed to himself, from Miss Howard, the "Mother Superior," of a *professedly* Protestant community, called "Sisters of Mercy," intimating a hope that, the "Oratory" being now completed, the Lady Gertrude Austyn, would at her earliest convenience, visit the Institution, of which she had been so generous a patroness. This invitation was named to Sir Willis and Lady Mowbray, shortly


after an interview with Mr. Grey, upon the subject of leaving Clara under the charge of Miss Howard, during their absence from England; a proposal, which, as Mr. Grey had rightly calculated, had been heard without much opposition; indeed, after some discussion, it was hailed, rather as likely to benefit Clara, by a wholesome restraint upon her mind, in its present wayward mood. It was therefore agreed, that the whole party should, at once, engage a first-class carriage of the Great Western train, to the nearest station within reach of Rosenfield. The sun shone brightly, the day was, altogether, most tempting for such an excursion, and in less than an hour, the carriage was at the door, to convey them to the train, the magic mode of transit which seems to set time and distance at defiance. "St. Anne's," or, the "Home of Peace," we believe, was the first establishment of the kind, then known in England, and well, perhaps, would it be, could we say, that it was also the last. The building was large, and of Norman architecture, raised within an enclosure, sheltered by an adjacent wood, which gave to the whole a picturesque appearance, as it stood in the secluded village of Rosenfield, some miles distant from London, in the diocese of a bishop, long since deceased, whose successor wisely prohibited its continuance, as inconsistent with its professed character of Protestantism. The sisterhood dispersed, and

the house was afterwards converted into an agricultural school, whether still existing we know not.

Arrived at St. Anne's, the visitors were ushered into a large room, called the "refectory," furnished only with long tables, and benches, most comfortless in appearance, its only ornament being a splendid painting of the crucifixion. In a few moments Miss Howard entered, and, with much graceful courtesy, welcomed her guests, notwithstanding the awkwardness of introducing herself to so many strangers. She had, however, no difficulty in identifying Sir Willis and Lady Mowbray, neither could she be mistaken in the younger party; the beautiful countenance of Lady Gertrude at once convincing her, that it was the original of a face she had so often heard described; and she immediately addressed her, with expressions of grateful respect, as the generous patroness of the Institution. Clara was received almost like a child, as if the Mother Superior, already wished to impress her with a sense of her own importance; nevertheless, there was something so winning in the address of Miss Howard, that Clara at once felt drawn towards her. Gertrude was less favourably impressed, for, as she looked upon the calm pale face, with a somewhat melancholy expression in the smile, she was struck with the cold haughtiness of her countenance, not at all in character, she thought, with the extreme



humility and self-abnegation which she had heard ascribed to that lady. After partaking of some refreshments, the conversation turned upon the Institution, and its objects. Everything was detailed which could exalt the vast system of its charities ; all was withheld which could awaken suspicion of its questionable tendency. Sir Willis entreated permission to see the Institution, to which Miss Howard immediately assented, and led the way up stairs to several galleries, along which were ranged small dormitories, barely furnished with iron beds, without a single article which could be mistaken for a *luxury* ; even looking-glasses, were apparently *out of rule*. Having seen two of these sleeping apartments, they were conducted to another, assigned to the Mother Superior, arranged with both taste and comfort, but it was decorated with emblems, little in accordance with Protestant ideas. Over the mantelpiece were several portraits of saints, some of whom were represented as undergoing the most revolting penances ; others, in a state of beatitude. In the centre, was a small shrine of carved ebony, lined with velvet, in which was an alabaster figure of the Madonna and Child, a crown of small diamonds, surmounting the Virgin's brow. On one side of the shrine, was a human skull, and on the other, an open breviary. Sir Willis admired the workmanship of the Madonna, but reddened as he remarked,



"This is not a very English display, Miss Howard. I hope you are all strictly of the Anglican Church here?"

Miss Howard, without the slightest embarrassment, replied, "The venerable diocesan, who superintends us, would scarcely like to hear our orthodoxy so doubted, Sir Willis. Those things are simply used as *aids* to spiritual devotion, and not, in the slightest degree, as objects of idolatrous worship."

"Oh! if the bishop sanctions them, it is all right," said Sir Willis; "nor can there be any objection, of course, to an image of our Lord's mother, if not worshipped as in Italy," said Sir Willis in a satisfied tone.

"We have not only the sanction of our excellent bishop in all we do," replied Miss Howard, proudly, "but the constant superintendence of the rector of Rosenfield, and his curate, all of whom, we feel it a sacred duty implicitly to obey, and on the same principle, am *I obeyed*, as Mother Superior of St. Anne's, by my dear children here, because, delegated by holy Church, to exercise charge over them."

"Glad to hear it," exclaimed Sir Willis; "let all things be done in order, is a good rule, and obedience to superiors, is the best test of religion." Then, turning to Lady Mowbray, he added, "The very place for Clara, my love, I think we need not *hesitate* a moment longer in our decision."

"Just as you please, of course," replied Lady Mowbray, sadly. "I could wish, that Clara needed no discipline from her mother's side, but perhaps, it is for the best, and I must be content."

The subject of these last remarks heard them not, Lady Gertrude and Clara having turned to a recess, at the further end of the room, in which stood a table, evidently intended as a sacramental altar, being covered with a richly embroidered cloth, and on it was a wooden crucifix, above which hung a painting of the Virgin Mary, with candles, and a vase of fresh gathered flowers on each side. Miss Howard, having turned to see how Clara received her mother's pointed rebuke, immediately crossed to the recess, and said, with a heightened colour, "Lady Gertrude will pardon me, when I say, that this is strictly private." Gertrude of course apologized, and the whole party left the room. When Sir Willis found himself again in the refectory, he remarked that they had not yet seen the Oratory, in which, he understood, was a handsome painted window, the gift of Lady Gertrude. Miss Howard seemed perplexed, and, for a moment, hesitated in her reply. "I fear, Sir Willis, that I must for the present, refuse you admittance there, as this is the hour of 'Terce,' at which, some of the sisters, not occupied with the poor, are engaged at their devotions. I hope another time, I may have it in my

power to meet your wishes. The Oratory is, however, simply a room appropriated to religious exercises, and, apart from the window, contains nothing which, I think, could interest you."

To this, of course, nothing could be said, and the conversation turned upon the necessary preliminaries for Clara's admittance, in the course of a few days. Miss Howard then requested permission to say a few words, in private, to the young novice, if, in the meantime, Sir Willis and Lady Mowbray would like to walk round the garden, from one part of which, was a view considered highly picturesque. Gertrude was also about to follow them through a glass door, opening upon a lawn, when a significant look from Miss Howard arrested her, and, unperceived by the elders of the party, she followed the Mother Superior and Clara, to the room from which they had returned, but a few minutes before. Miss Howard then briefly explained to Gertrude, that in declining to show the Oratory to her friends, she had acted in obedience to the injunctions of Mr. Grey, but under all circumstances, this of course, could not apply to her, to whom the sisterhood was so largely indebted for a refuge, worthy of its object. Then, turning to Clara, and laying her hand affectionately on her shoulder, she asked, "And you, dear Clara, are now one of my own precious children, and therefore, I wish, at once, to invest you

with a badge of the Order, to which you will henceforth belong. Next week, I trust, you will be consecrated to the angel's life of a sister, by the revered incumbent of Rosenfield, and his curate."

Miss Howard then entered the recess to which we have before alluded ; and, taking from a shelf a casket, she presented Clara, first with a piece of parchment, on which was written, the rules of the society, and an explanation of the different "Orders" into which the "sisters" were divided. She then opened the casket in which were several small "badges," from which Clara was to make a selection. These had the appearance of pretty trinkets ; Clara chose one in the form of a triangle, a small silver bird suspended within it. This belonged to the "Order of the Holy Dove," to which the novice solemnly subscribed. Miss Howard replaced the casket, retaining Clara's badge in her hand, and then, with great solemnity, she led the way to the end of a long gallery, where, softly opening a door covered with baize, she entered the Oratory. Nothing could exceed the surprise and admiration of both the visitors, as they entered what, in every respect, resembled a chapel, and, for its size, was beautiful in the extreme. At the upper end, was a large cross of rough hewn wood, raised on a low white marble pedestal. On this were ranged several

porcelain vases filled with flowers, four large candles, and a scroll of paper, on which were inscribed several names, both of the living and the dead, for whom the prayers of the sisterhood were requested. On the opposite side, was a painted window, representing Christ washing the feet of His disciples. Underneath this, and raised on two broad steps of marble, stood the "altar," adorned with a rich cloth, and on which was a small crucifix of ebony, the figure being delicately carved in ivory, vases of flowers, and two lighted candles. Near this "altar" knelt three "sisters," their young heads bowed in rapt devotion; several others occupied low open pews of carved oak, all engaged, apparently, in prayer, and dressed alike in plain course grey stuff. Miss Howard, after standing for some minutes at the entrance, leaving the solemn scene to make its due impression on her guests, beckoned them to follow her. She led the way to the cross, and reverently bowed before it, and then motioned Clara to kneel down at her side.

"Do you desire to dedicate yourself to a religious life, and to works of mercy?" she asked.

"I do," fervently responded Clara, trembling with emotion.

"Do you promise unreserved and unquestioning obedience to your spiritual mother, let her command or require what she may?"

"I do," again said Clara, looking up with clasped hands, and a flushed cheek.

Miss Howard then stooped down and kissed her forehead, placing the badge of her Order round the neck of the kneeling girl. There was something so inexpressibly solemn in the deep stillness, the softened light, the kneeling sisters, the dark cross, and the whispered benediction of the Mother Superior, as she laid her hand on Clara's head, that Gertrude, too, instinctively knelt beside her, with emotions scarcely to be described. In a few minutes both the girls arose from their position, and Miss Howard, giving a small wooden hand-cross to Clara, said, in a very low voice, "When thou shalt have learnt the deep mystery of the cross, and 'accomplished thy self-surrender, thou shalt have discovered, wherein lieth the mystery of peace.'"^{*} Clara took the cross and kissed it, and then concealed it, together with her "badge," underneath her shawl. All three were now softly leaving the Oratory, Miss Howard leading them behind the pews, not to disturb the sisters who were still kneeling before the altar, when Gertrude suddenly started, for, in a small room or confessional, which they were passing, but had not before observed, lay a young girl full length on her face, her arms stretched out in the

^{*} "Sisters of Mercy," by Rev. J. Spurrell

form of a cross ! Miss Howard looked vexed, but beckoning her companions forward, all hastily left the room. Gertrude for a moment felt shocked. Could she, indeed, be in *England* ? She had seen such things practised among the Roman Catholics abroad, but this was no Romish *convent* ? When again they had left the gallery, Gertrude asked Miss Howard, for what reason that solitary girl was lying on the bare ground, apart from all the rest of her sisters ?

“ I really cannot quite answer you, Lady Gertrude,” said Miss Howard, carelessly, “ as this belongs to the secrets of confession. Our reverend curate was here to-day, and probably the sister to whom you allude, has had some sins of pride to acknowledge, for which such penance is a most wholesome discipline, and frequently practised here, as humiliating to the pride of human nature.”

Gertrude shook her head, for she thought how far more would such an act—if imposed upon her, by any confessor on earth—irritate, rather than humiliate *her* mind ! She made no remark, however, but she sighed, and thought of Captain Mowbray. Miss Howard saw that an unfavourable impression had been received, and, to neutralize it, when she reached the staircase, she turned round, that Lady Gertrude might now precede her, and said, in a voice of sweetest tone, “ The Lady Gertrude has now

seen something of the blessedness of her noble boon, and may well repose upon the good work she has done, to this holy, happy community, as one which will merit a rich reward."

Gertrude, looked at the cold, haughty face, before her, and thought how little it expressed the happiness which her words implied; her own heart, at that moment, feeling anything but at peace, or satisfied, she replied, with something like irony in her tone, "The good work has yet to be proved by its fruits, Miss Howard, before we can esteem it '*blessed*.' I confess, that I should not like to see it, actually hanging upon the horns of the Papacy."

Miss Howard reddened; and a look of stern displeasure, obliterated all traces of the winning smile; but she made an effort to command herself, and merely retorted, "The Lady Gertrude has been so much in Rome, I believe, that, perhaps, such figures of speech, should create neither pain nor displeasure; nevertheless, I, who have wandered little beyond the British soil, am at a loss to construe the meaning of such metaphor."

"Nay," said Gertrude, sorry, and yet amused, to see the effect of her momentary spleen, "it was only a little affectionate jealousy, in behalf of this same British Isle, that made me revolt against the admission of an invader. I meant but to ask, if what I

have just witnessed, is not a very near transcript of the Romish system?"

"I really cannot answer you," replied Miss Howard, looking very innocent. "I never apply myself to controversy, and, therefore, am very ignorant of religious systems, apart from that of our holy Anglican Church. I obey *her* voice, Lady Gertrude, through that of my bishop, and know nothing of foreign creeds."

"Oh! as to that," said Gertrude, laughing, "Rome and England will never quarrel on the score of *creeds*; so far, at least, as St. Athanasius and the Apostles go; and as Sir Willis Mowbray says, all must be right, if the bishop be head and chief."

Clara, looked reproachfully at Gertrude, but without further remark, all three returned to the refectory, where they found Sir Willis and Lady Mowbray, impatiently awaiting them. After a few mutual courtesies, the guests took their leave of the Mother Superior. Clara, lingered for a moment behind, to express her happiness in the prospect before her, and being warmly embraced by her spiritual mother, she bade her a hasty farewell.

Poor Clara! with a lightened heart, a conscience perverted by delusions, false, as they were fatal, she stood on the eve of separation from a dying brother, and parents, and home, and yet believed herself sealed to an "angel's life" on earth, to meet an

angel's reward in heaven ! Casting away every duty which real Christianity involves ; breaking asunder the sweet ties, by which, God himself, had bound her to claims of social life, in which, as daughter, sister, friend, she might serve and honour Him, by dutiful obedience, and active kindness, in her appointed sphere of usefulness ; in sacrificing all these, for a mere illusive and morbid dedication of herself to services not required of her, she was, alas ! "sowing to the wind, to reap the whirlwind ;" and wrapping her soul in the fallacies of a self-righteous religion, she was preparing a future dark day of painful retribution and regret, when she would awake from her spiritual trance, to find, how lighter than a feather must weigh all human merits, and human works, if balanced against God's holy law.

The party now left St. Anne's, and preferring to walk through the village of Rosenfield, they sent on the carriage, to await them on the other side of the bridge separating it from the high road. In passing near some cottages, they were attracted by a group of poor people, evidently engaged, with some one needing their help, and they stopped to inquire the cause, with a view of rendering assistance if required. A good-natured looking woman came forward, and said, addressing Lady Mowbray, in reply, " Oh ! bless you, ma'am, it's only one of the Sisters of Mercy fainted away when she dressed

Betsey Green's bad leg. They're wonderful good, to be sure, them sisters are, but there's plenty of us to do that for Betsey, the more's the pity, that such ladies, will force their hearts, to things they ar'n't accustomed to ; and it vexes Betsey, too, only she don't like to say, she'd rather have one of us about her leg, because it's a part of their religion, you see, ma'am ; and they'd break their vow to the Almighty, if they didn't do everything that goes against their hearts to do. Howsomever, the lady will soon come round again."

"Part of their *religion*?" said Lady Mowbray, "I see no religion in dressing a sore leg, nor charity either, if others can do it, who are more accustomed to the office."

"Lor, ma'am," exclaimed the woman, "that's nothing to what the sisters do sometimes. I have known some of the young things among 'em, no older than my girl, go down that lane there, as lonely as it is, in the darkest nights, to go and see a sick woman, and read the Church prayers to her, down in that 'ere hamlet, as you may see, my lady, if you look agin them trees ; and sometimes, too, in such a pour-down rain, that I wouldn't send a cat out, and I've known 'em drenched to the skin, for they mustn't have an umbrella up, and all for religion. My good man often says, our Mary should'n't walk up that lane at nights, no how ; he don't think it's

proper ; but, in course, it's very good on 'em to do it ; some of them, I have heard say, is great ladies, too ; and our parson says, they've angels to take care on them ; and so I dare say they have, ma'am, for I never heard tell of any harm come to 'em yet, poor things ; but they haven't been here but one winter, and my husband says he don't believe a word about the angels, because the ladies aint bound by any law to God, to go and do such things ; perhaps, that's true, but I don't know."

Sir Willis and Lady Mowbray thanked the woman for her information, and walked on ; the former remarking, " I think those sisters are carrying things a little too far."

" A great deal too far, in my opinion," replied Lady Mowbray ; " I don't believe the bishop can possibly sanction such things ; why, Roman Catholic nuns couldn't do more."

" Nay, my love," said Sir Willis, " I saw nothing contrary to the Anglican Church ; and as to the sisters going out at nights, in '*pour-down*' rain, as the woman calls it, that is all village talk, depend upon it ; a little of the marvellous, worked up to give effect to the grey dresses of the sisterhood. Miss Howard is, evidently, a very superior woman, and would not countenance any such doings. I think she is just the person to hold a beneficial influence over Clara's mind, until we return to England in the

spring ; when, she will be glad enough to come to us again ; and make herself happy at home. I cannot understand what is come to the child, that she should be so perverse ; she, who was once so remarkably tractable ; however, she will come round again, I have no doubt."

Lady Mowbray sighed, but made no reply. Lady Gertrude and Clara, walking behind, heard none of these remarks. The latter, who appeared greatly elated by all she had seen, expatiated upon the angelic degree of self-denial exercised by the fainting "sister;" but Gertrude thought it very foolish, because very needless and uncalled for ; she saw no merit in such a work of supererogation, to which the sister was not called by any claim whatever ; so far from it, her services were evidently neither required, nor acceptable.

The carriage now being reached, no more was said ; the party returned to London, each one differently impressed with their visit.

Such is a faint outline of an institution, originating in the futile hope of organising a Protestant Society of women, set apart for works of charity, and religious discipline.* These societies were to be exclu-

* For a more detailed account of *similar* institutions, recently established in England, see a tract called "Sisters of Mercy," by the Rev. Mr. Spurrell, and also one by Miss Campbell, on the *same* subject.

sively Protestant, while embracing the assumed beatitude of what was called, "the sacramental life," as enjoyed by Romanists devoted to monastic sanctity : yet, without those idolatrous ceremonies, which were considered by the advocates of such societies, the only real barriers of separation, between Protestantism and Popery. In fact, the "Sisters of Mercy" were to combine all that they considered as the orthodox principles of both Churches, while equally avoiding the errors of each : a kind of utopian oasis in the vast wilderness of life, as visionary in design, as it was dangerous in practice. We say not, that the motives were otherwise than pure, or well-intentioned, which first induced a trial of conventual discipline—for so, we may well term the "Rules," imposed upon the sisterhood—within the pale of the Anglican Church ; but, like everything that is based upon man's wisdom, apart from the "wisdom which is from above," the system itself was fallacious, and sinful, as necessarily opening a way for progressive error and abuses, which must ultimately prove its own destruction. Christianity can never be localised, or concentrated ; its very character being expansive and illimitable. Our Lord, himself, "went about doing good ;" His whole life in the flesh, was one of holy obedience *to God*, and of perpetual benevolence towards man ; but, He went about to do *His Father's will*, not *His own* ; as He

expressly declared, "I seek not my own will, but the will of my Father, which hath sent me." "For, the works which my Father *hath given me to finish*, the same works that I do, bear witness of me." Neither is there any warrant in Scripture, to authorise *blind, unquestioning obedience* to the constituted "*Rules*" of any human society on earth ; or to those who devise them, which are not clearly and wholly subservient to the obedience, first due to God, the "Lord our Governor." As Christ Jesus asks of the perverse Jews, "How can ye believe, which receive *honour one of another*, and seek not the honour which *cometh from God only*?" If, then, He who was, in His Godhead, "Lord of all," submitted to become a servant for our sakes, ever obedient to the will of the Father, even in His very works of love, how far more does it behove *us*, as servants, indeed, to follow His blessed example, and to seek, not our own way, but the way *appointed for us* ; not to do our *own will*, but the will of God, according to the leadings of His good providence. The principle of this holy obedience *to God*, lies deep within the heart of every true believer ; extending to those, under whose governance or authority *He* may place us, whether to our parents, or teachers, to our sovereign, or rulers, wherever we may do so, *in subservience* to His own commands. Such will be the fruits of Christian love, springing from a pure faith

in Christ our Saviour, although the husk of an evil nature will never fall from the fruit, until, ripened by the "Sun of righteousness," it is gathered for the kingdom of God in heaven. How presumptuous is it, then,—how arrogant in man, to devise for himself works for salvation, and call them *holy*, even while rejecting those which God, himself, has appointed for the servants of His blessed household. He may send one to the far-off boundary of earth's remotest regions, but the mission is still *His own*; and the missionary, who is faithful in his work, will, day by day, consult the chart of God's holy word, that he may "keep the way, wherein he should walk;" assured, that it will never direct him falsely, or lead him where he cannot find a "lamp unto his feet," and a "light unto his paths;" for the unseen presence of the Lord, shall be as the "pillar of fire," before him; but, not one task on the way, will be self-imposed as a ground of merit,—not one step advanced as a claim to reward. Or, the mission of piety may be confined to the narrow limits of a sick room; to the orphaned family; to the haunts of poverty; or, even to the lonely couch. In each, the servant of the Lord will strive, earnestly and simply, to do his Master's will; although, only He who sent him to the task, can ever know, how hard to human nature, are the trials which it may involve. But *there*, too, God is in the midst of them; and the

believer seeks no other witness of his meek endeavours; and even, while unconscious how like a fragrant flower, his influence steals through the atmosphere of his example, the holy principle of piety is taking root—how widely, none can tell—to yield a hundredfold for the harvest of the judgment-day; because the seed is of the Spirit of God, and God will multiply and bless that which the Lord hath planted. Or, Christianity may be called to a yet severer ordeal, amid the element of the world, eschewing evil, in the midst of evil. The pious child, may have to bear the opposition of ungodly parents. The Christian wife, or husband, or master, with the tempers, and the taunts, of those with whom they are associated. Such trials, are inseparable from holiness of life on earth, but, in each and all, the “Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.” His unslumbering eye bears witness to the inward conflicts, and outward tribulations of His children; and the rainbow of His promise is arched over them, as an everlasting covenant, that “as is their day, so shall their strength be.” But, these trials and conflicts must be interwoven with the life to which every child of God is appointed, within the vineyard of the Lord’s inheritance. His labourers choose not their allotment of ground. With cheerful, grateful hearts, they go wherever their Master sends them. Enough, that they are privileged to labour for Him,

one hour or twelve ; whether beneath the sunshine or the storm ; for well they know, that the " Lord of the harvest " is working with them, and loving them with a love, which is their priceless reward ! In *that* vineyard, we hear of no " contemplative life." In the blessed Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, is parcelled out, as on a map, every line of instruction ; every pathway of duty ; every hill and valley of God's Christendom ; but, *there* we find no enclosures for monastic asceticism, or conventual seclusion. All is for active, practical Christianity ; and so far from any act of " voluntary humility," being acceptable to God, it is our duty to avoid all that can needlessly afflict the body, or disturb the mind ; and he who does so, on the principle that he is " not his own," but is " bought with a price," will be the one of all others, most patiently enduring, where avoidance of suffering, come in what form it may, lies beyond his own control. But, when, on the other hand, the disappointments and sorrows of life engender a longing desire for monastic austerity, it is a proof of human infirmity, and not of religious submission ; nay, it is, too often, the result of sullen and impatient tempers, which every precept of the Gospel, urges us to repel, to fight, to overcome. Neither are the penances of the cloistered penitent, any evidence of that " godly sorrow " for sin, which " worketh repentance " unto salvation ; they are

rather the offspring of mortified pride, or morbid sensibilities ; mistaking the form, for the power of godliness. The real work of genuine repentance is a daily crucifixion of besetting sins ; a *spiritual* denial of every act and desire which can militate against holiness of life. The Christian's warfare is with *himself* ; his own soul is the battle-field, where the enemies that assail him must be vanquished. It is *there*, the great struggle is encountered, between the corrupt nature and the sanctified spirit : it is *there*, the believer will summon the grace of God, by prayer, to effect the victory, which no moral power can achieve ; and it is within the heart itself, that the deep reality of self-denying faith, must be exercised, a thousand times more painful and difficult, in its unseen, silent strivings, than all those outward inflictions of the body, which serve but to deceive the soul, and to debase the very principle of Christianity ; reminding us of the poor maniac, who was "night and day in the tomb, cutting and maiming himself with stones," urged, as we are told, "by an evil spirit within him."

But, to return from these digressions, on the evening of the Rosenfield visit, Sir Willis Mowbray sent for Mr. Grey, whom he received alone in his study, where he usually retired after dinner, for a quiet hour. He still retained an unabated regard for his former chaplain, and was often influenced by

his advice in matters of family business. So, now he was wholly guided by him, in the removal of Clara to the temporary charge of Miss Howard, which being finally arranged, Mr. Grey left Sir Willis, to seek a private interview with Lady Gertrude, as the only opportunity he was likely to command, for some pecuniary settlements, before his departure from England. She met him in her own sitting-room, and soon the conversation turned upon the morning's visit to the "Sisters of Mercy;" when Mr. Grey, was not slow to perceive that some disappointed feeling, mingled with her admiration of the Oratory, as a beautiful specimen of artistic taste; but, she evidently avoided dwelling much upon the subject; at once telling him, that, in accordance with his directions, she had placed her promised contribution of five hundred pounds towards the erection of the "Home of Peace." In acknowledging the generous boon, he dwelt forcibly upon the pious character of the institution, and then, with considerable tact, he urged upon Gertrude, her deep responsibilities as one baptized to the Church; entreating her to continue steadfast in her adherence to its principles, that she might receive the mysterious unction of its holy sacraments, amidst all that must try her faith and obedience, which it would be the great aim of many, with whom she associated, to pervert and frustrate. "My prayer for you, dear

Lady Gertrude," he added, "will ever be, that you may be guarded from heretical influence; would that I could persuade you, before the world can ruffle the peace of your spirit, to seek shelter from its sorrows, in that happy sisterhood of mercy, where the evil of the world is unknown! Remember, it is a blessed thing to resign even father or mother, for righteousness' sake."

Mr. Grey immediately saw, by the countenance of Lady Gertrude, that he had gone too far, and for once had overrated his own influence. For the first time, something like suspicion had, that day, been awakened, unfavourable to that influence, and this had mortified, fully as much as it had pained her. The last remark of Mr. Grey seemed now to confirm that suspicion, and she replied, in her usual tone of sarcasm, when irritated, "Papa, must first endow me with a step-mother, who may be sufficiently disagreeable to drive me from the shelter of his own loving care; besides which, my wayward will must be considerably schooled in the mere *a, b, c*, of moral submission, before I could possibly learn the great lesson of St. Anne's, comprised in its 'Rule of Holy Obedience;' which, every novice must, I find, learn so well by rote, that even a sigh of contradiction must never fall upon the ear of the Mother Superior, even where common sense, setting aside a far higher principle of intelligence, might legitimately oppose

‘rules,’ which are as dangerous to the soul of her who commands, as they are debasing to the whole character of those who must obey. Clara, who is in an ecstasy of delight, has just given me these ‘directions’ to look over, and they have quite satisfied me, how little I could ever be worthy of such an ‘angel’s life.’ ”

Mr. Grey felt exceedingly vexed ; but, accustomed to Lady Gertrude in her perverse moods, he appeared not seriously to heed her, and smiling, replied evasively, “You do not, I know, really mean what your words might imply, I should otherwise be, indeed, both surprised and grieved. What ‘rule’ has so especially displeased you, my fair friend ? you have, probably, altogether mistaken its meaning.”

“Nay, that is sufficiently plain,” replied Lady Gertrude, taking a roll of parchment from the table. “You will find by what I shall read to you, that the Mother Superior of St. Anne’s, is to be obeyed with the same reverent submission, as that which is due to the Lord Jehovah ! The ‘Rule of Holy Obedience’ runs thus, ‘Ye shall ever address the spiritual mother with honour and respect ; avoid speaking of her among yourselves ; cherish and *obey her* with holy love, without any murmur or sign of hesitation or repugnance, but simply, cordially, and promptly obey, with cheerfulness ; and *banish from*

your mind any question as to the wisdom of the command given you! If ye fail in this, ye have failed to resist a temptation of the Evil One.* And, then, to crown the whole, as if such restrictions were not sufficiently imperious, the blasphemous exhortation of the spiritual mother, on giving these 'Rules' to Clara, was 'when you hear me speak, you should think it is the voice of Jesus Christ.'† Thus, Mr. Grey, the *real* mother, to whom a child is bound by every sacred obligation, holds neither part nor lot in this miscalled '*holy obedience*.' The 'dear daughter in Christ' may leave a parent's roof, not only without that parent's permission, but in spite of her known disapprobation; while, infatuated to believe, that it is a righteous act, even in defiance of that holier command, 'Children obey your parents.' "

"That same word," said Mr. Grey, "declares, 'He that loveth father or mother' more than Christ, is 'not worthy' of Him."

"The sophistry of such an interpretation," interrupted Gertrude, impatiently, "may impose upon the 'Mother Superior,' and her abject children, but not upon a mind like yours, Mr. Grey. If we love the Lord Jesus Christ, you know well, that we best prove that love, by honouring the authority of those

* "Sisters of Mercy," by Rev. J. Spurrell, p. 16.

† Ibid. p. 17.

whom He has appointed to hold rule over us, and to cherish those ties, by which He may have bound us to the duties of social life. Father and mother, are God's vicegerents; in disobeying them, we disobey Him, unless, themselves rebelling against the Holy One, they would compel us to the ranks of their own disloyalty. Then, and *then only*, must the child forsake the earthly, for the heavenly Father. Yes, Mr. Grey, and with your real piety of heart, you would be the first to remind me, that such is the spirit of our Lord's commands, that were my father, the veriest infidel, the love of Christ should constrain me but the more patiently to endure, all that his infidelity might inflict; so, that I might set before him, the power of Christ, which could alone bind me to his side. But, on the other hand, if, indeed, even *my* father, were to command me, contrary to God's commands, to break a moral law, or to compromise a religious duty; or, did he, with the ill-abused trust of parental authority, bid me marry a blasphemer,—a man, living without God in the world,—then, would I, God helping me, forsake all, choosing rather to follow Christ, even if driven to a wilderness, where ravens only could bring me food! But, this is a far different reading of that holy text, to all which is taught by the 'rules' of St. Anne's."

Mortified and pained, beyond measure, by the unlooked for impression thus evidently received, against


the very channel, through which he most expected to win the heart of Gertrude to his own views ; Mr. Grey remained, for some moments, silent and embarrassed. Rarely, did his master mind meet with any such antagonism from those whom he resolved to lead, but it only tended to give additional motive to his determination of winning her over to *his* own views and to the Church he served, while fully aware that she was not to be guided, like most others, by mere command of moral force, but could only be impelled by the under currents of an imperceptible tide, onwards upon the stream of his resistless influence. Nevertheless, although yielding an implicit deference to the intellectual superiority of Mr. Grey, she would frequently, in her more wayward moods, strive for mastery over a will, which, in spite of herself, she knew, was dominant over every other. Little did she suspect, how often, in reality, that strong mind was subjugated by her own power over a heart, devotedly, but most unhappily, attached to her ; and never had these contending feelings been so powerfully called forth, in his intercourse with Lady Gertrude, as at this moment of her implied doubt and reproof. At length he looked up, and said, with perfect self-command, "Dear Lady Gertrude, your censures of Miss Howard, and her establishment, arise, I feel persuaded, from some misapprehension. I know of no service, or obedience,

required of the 'sisters,' incompatible with that of the Church, which it is their holy aim to honour, in submission to the will of God ; nothing subversive of an earthly parent's authority, if it trench not upon that of higher claims. I have heard of no such 'rules,' as those you have so unsparingly criticised, and believe, that, by some mistake, that paper, or parchment, containing them, which you say Clara received from the Mother Superior, refers to something quite distinct from St. Anne's."

"Then, it is as I suspected," said Lady Gertrude, frankly ; "you know little or nothing of the interior management of an Institution, whose system, well designed, has been abused or perverted, by an ambitious superintendent. But, these things ought not to be, and I verily believe, they have involved you in suspicions, which, from my inmost heart, I think unjust towards you, although, after what I have seen to-day, they may not be altogether unreasonable."

Mr. Grey started ; an angry expression passed over his countenance, as he said, bitterly, "This is the work of Captain Mowbray ; and is as cruelly unjust to me, as your own strictures against Miss Howard. Something, I see, has vexed you, and prejudice has misapplied, what, in itself, may be perfectly blameless, if better understood ; but, the matter shall have my earliest attention."

Lady Gertrude made no reply to these remarks, but, as if she had scarcely heard them, she said, "You know how little sympathy I have in common with Lady Mowbray, for hitherto I have thought her cold and selfish, as she is doubtless worldly; but I have, within the last hour, seen, how brightly the mother's love burns within the casket, which, outwardly, looks like one of ice. Almost, on her knees, has she vainly urged upon Clara, the claims of a sick, perhaps, a dying brother, and the yearning of her own heart for the confidence, and affectionate companionship of her only girl, in what may terminate, a melancholy and fruitless exile. All this, she pleaded with the unaffected earnestness of genuine feelings, for which I had scarcely given her credit; all, to induce the child, whom she had good right to command, rather than entreat, to obey the real, and give up the fictitious mother; to be a 'sister of mercy,' indeed, to the suffering brother, needing a tender nurse's care, far more than the poor of Rosenfield can do, who have the poor at hand, and willing to help them. I have no brother, and my mother is in heaven; but, oh! how did I then wish that I could take a sister's place beside poor Arthur's couch, and soothe, with a daughter's duteous sympathy, that mother's aching heart! Yet Clara, the once affectionate, docile, grateful Clara, could resist it all, exulting in that resistance, as a holy surrender



of herself, for '*righteousness*' sake,' and impiously, —although, perhaps, with unconscious impiety,— declare, that thus she had vowed to abandon kindred and home, for the '*ineffable union with Christ*,' in that '*angel's life*' on earth, which would alone prepare her for glory in the life to come! And, Clara, will go forth to the '*Home of Peace*,' the most devout, and the most deluded of its sisterhood. She will kneel before that beautiful altar, not to present the sacrifice of a contrite, humbled spirit, but to triumph in the strength and constancy of her own righteousness, in bearing the persecutions of a mother's resentment; and she will kneel before the cross, and thank God, she is not like Gertrude Austyn, although, at this moment, she has spurned that real cross, which He who was crucified, would have her take up, in patient, self-denying submission to the will of God, in those domestic charities, to which He has appointed her. *This*, is the teaching of the '*Mother Superior*;' and when Miss Howard boasts of a bishop's sanction, and your own, to a system which savours far more of the Jesuit priest, than of a Protestant prelate, I am constrained to say, that I believe her, in heart, to be more a Roman, than an Anglo-Catholic; and I feel at this moment, that, perhaps, better had my right hand perished, than have given money for such work, if these be its fruits."

Mr. Grey had turned so deadly pale, that Gertrude felt for a moment alarmed ; and, mistaking the source of his emotion, she said, affectionately, “ I meant not thus to pain, or to condemn *you*, Mr. Grey, for I blame you not. You have, I see, been deceived, but the power of reparation is in your own hands, and well I know it will not be neglected, if through mistaken confidence in one, who goes beyond her office, you have been beguiled into unwatchfulness, very unlike your usually unremitting care, over every portion of your charge ; and it is on this ground only, I would have presumed so far upon your indulgence, in what may, I fear, look like censure towards yourself.”

“ Alas ! Lady Gertrude,” said Mr. Grey, mournfully, “ is there no drawing back, within yourself, from the holy principle of submission to the Church, that thus you cavil at its discipline, because, perchance, an error of judgment has misled one who is but human, to some act of mistaken zeal, in her difficult mission, in which she is yet inexperienced ? and because a weak-minded girl, has decided a course for herself, which she should have left to the discretion of others ?”

“ I have judged the case, neither by the one, nor the other,” replied Gertrude, firmly ; “ but by the authenticated rules of a system, wholly at variance with the Articles of our Anglican Church, which,

shame be it said, I had never even read until yesterday ; and I now ask you, solemnly, to tell me, are not some of your own views opposed to them ? and if so, can you conscientiously remain in the Anglican, or Church of England, as an Anglo-Catholic priest, bound as you are, and must be, to subscribe unreservedly to those very Articles, so long as you profess to be one ? I do not ask this lightly, and I feel sure, that you will not deceive me in your reply."

Gertrude spoke this in a tone both of dignity and deference. The painful suspicions of Captain Mowbray, against the being now standing before her, vividly rose to her remembrance, and, although she still believed them to be unjust, she fixed an earnest, searching look upon her companion, as if she fain would read upon his calm, intelligent countenance, denial of an implied, and painful charge. But, even with all his surpassing powers of self-command, for a moment he quailed before that glance, as he paused, with downcast eyes, to consider the answer most likely to evade her straight-forward appeal, without an actual falsehood, still repulsive to his better principles. At length, he replied, in a low, sad voice, " Most assuredly I can and do subscribe to those Articles, as a faithful servant of holy Church ; although, I may conscientiously believe, without denying them, that we, her ministers, are more

especially called upon to press forward to a higher and holier 'sacramental life,' than can be attained by limiting our faith within the compass of any Articles ; but, surely, such aspirations give no contradiction to their undoubted value, while we simply aim, to merge the mere letter into the spirit of their apostolic meaning."

"And does not this meaning merge into the *Papal* Church?" asked Gertrude, pointedly.

"Were I a priest of that Church, Lady Gertrude, a suspicion to which your questioning evidently tends," replied Mr. Grey, with more sternness than he had ever before addressed her, "even *you*, would scarcely dare venture to interrogate me, on matters touching its holy mysteries. But, I will, once more, answer you, that the truest son of the Anglican Church, may well, earnestly desire, that a 'unity of faith,' and a 'bond of peace,' should amalgamate into one, divided members of the Apostolic Church, by removing the errors of both parties, and so cancelling their unhappy differences. The great mistake of one, is, perhaps, the doctrine of excommunication, which no earthly power, can be entitled to exercise. The deeper sin of the other lies in its doctrine of justification by faith,—a doctrine which opens the door to every heresy, since 'the righteousness wherein we must stand at the last day, is not,' as the ultra-Protestant asserts, 'Christ's own

imputed obedience, but our own good works.* Such views, I trust, are not incompatible with an honest conscience, seeking, in all humility and earnestness of purpose, to be a follower of Christ; faithful to the holy Catholic Church, of which, I am a most unworthy servant."

"Say not unworthy, Mr. Grey," exclaimed Gertrude, with a flushed cheek. "I have done you wrong, even by a doubting word, although my own heart ever believed you true in heart and purpose; of all men, the most devoted, and self-denying. Good men seem widely to differ in their views of scriptural truth; but, I do believe, in all essential grounds, they perfectly unite. Do you forgive me the pain, which I see, I have inflicted—I will not say *needlessly*—for I could not bear the shadow of a doubt to rest upon one, whom I so highly honour and esteem? one, who will ever be remembered gratefully, as my spiritual guide, and friend."

Lady Gertrude arose; and walking forward to Mr. Grey, she gave him her hand, as, with a sweet, beseeching smile, she seemed to supplicate the pardon of a superior. An ashy paleness had again overspread the wan, and exhausted countenance of Mr. Grey; and even in *his* eye, stood a glistening tear, so rarely seen to tremble there. He took the offered hand of Gertrude in both his own, while his lips,


* Newman's Lectures on Justification, p. 60.

murmured, rather than spoke, a fervent blessing. For the first time, and the last, he kissed that hand ; but, it was with the reverent homage of a subject to a queen ; and then, abruptly, he left the room. They never met again !

CHAPTER XVI.

" Oh ! there is never sorrow of heart
That shall lack a timely end,
If but to God we turn, and ask
Of Him to be our friend."

ALICE EVERARD and her brother, sat together under the wide-spreading branches of that "old oak tree," where so often, in happier days, they had basked in the spring-time of childhood, without a thought of those stern realities which were so early to teach them the great lesson of life's discipline. Algernon had outgrown the boy ; and, although his manly countenance expressed the deeper thoughtfulness of an expanded intellect, it still retained the bright glow of buoyant youth, reflecting the sunshine of a joyous heart. But, often now was that sunshine overshadowed by the deep sorrow of his beloved sister, so silently and meekly endured,



that it claimed a tenfold sympathy, from those, who too well knew the lasting character of grief within a heart like hers, even while the chastened spirit rose above it all, to repose an un murmuring trust on that holy will, which "moves in a mysterious way," around the pathway of the just; dispensing the showers, or sunshine of grace, as faith needs the one, or the other, in its growth within the spirit of a child of God. She asked not why she had been thus stricken, by a sorrow of all others, she might think was the least deserved. Inflicted, indeed, by a mortal hand, it was yet enough, that her heavenly Father had permitted it to fall, when, by the faintest breath, He could have moved it far away, had He not seen she needed it. The name of Ernest Willoughby, had been engraven too deeply in the hearts of all around her to be forgotten, but it never now reached her ear; and although, as yet, he lived in her every thought, she daily strove to unlink him from the strong hold of her affections, which she resolved should never more be enchained by human love. And yet, she felt that he was wronged by the world's indignant reproach, and that it must be so; for few could appreciate the motives of an act towards her, in itself dishonourable; but, while she reprobated the weak infatuation which had beguiled him, she could not doubt the integrity of his motive; and it was, perhaps, a natural source of consola-

tion, that he had suffered to the full as much as she had done, in cancelling their engagement, for conscience's sake, upon a principle, indeed, too truly based upon sand ; but which, nevertheless, had been mistaken for gold ; and while, therefore, it was now to be the great struggle of her young life to love Ernest, only with the cold regard of a painful estrangement ; yet, there was no reason why she might not pray for him, and pity him ; as one, who was still a servant of God, and in His sight, perhaps, as greatly sinned against, as sinning, under an influence, powerful, as it was unprincipled. But, in such feelings, she knew that she must henceforth stand alone ; they would meet with no responsive sympathy from either her father, or her brother. She had silenced their reproaches, but saw that she had failed to mitigate their indignation ; so, now, her silent intercessions at the throne of a merciful High Priest, in behalf of the erring one, must remain as the cherished secret, within her blighted heart ; and the name of Ernest Willoughby, be like music which had passed away, but left its sweet cadence still lingering mournfully, around the memory of her mind ; although it could return no sound to fall upon another's ear.

Immediately after the last departure of Ernest from Earlswood, the return of Algernon had been hastened by the sad tidings of his sister's altered position, detailed in a letter from his father. It had, also, been

proposed that Lady Gertrude should accompany him from London ; but Alice had entreated to be left alone for a little while, and Mr. Everard knew her too well, to urge anything, against which her own feelings decided; but, he did not know how doubly sharp the edge of her sorrow had fallen, under a conviction, that Gertrude had been an instrument, in the fearful work of her devastated happiness ; that she, too, had deceived her trusting love, and, by a clandestine influence, had strengthened Ernest in his infatuation. True, she was herself infatuated, equally led by Mr. Grey, to yield both conscience and judgment, to his own subtle opinions ; but, even this, in the upright mind of Alice, could plead no extenuation for a want of confidence, amounting to treachery towards herself. Under these circumstances, therefore, she felt indisposed to meet Lady Gertrude, until more equal to the painful explanation, which must necessarily be encountered, before the same intimacy could be restored, which once, so closely, and so tenderly united them. All this had added to the full measure of her heart's deep grief ; but, while she declined the proffered companionship of her cousin, the real cause was known only to herself. It was enough that she wished to be alone ; her father asked not why. So, Algernon only was summoned, and without an hour's delay, he set off for home, impatient only to share the distress,

which no human sympathy could remove. Alice met him with a smile, but it was so sad, that he would far rather have seen her weep. She was pale as a lily; her whole weight seemed bending beneath the unutterable weight of mental suffering. Algernon pressed her to his faithful heart without a word, while unresistingly she laid her head upon his bosom, like a wearied child; but, when she felt his tears upon her cheek, she looked up, and fondly passing her hand over his face, she said, with a calm, low voice, "Algy, my own dear brother; you and papa, are all the world to me now; I will try to be happy, and grateful, for two such priceless blessings."

Algernon brushed away his tears, and, still supporting her with his arm, he exclaimed, "My darling Alice, never shall you want a heart devotedly to love, or a hand to protect you, while I live; and if your brother can make you happy, we shall have many summer days together yet; so cheer up, my sister. Life has its dark night hours, but these pass away, before that 'joy which cometh in the morning,' over which no mortal hand can cast a cloud."

"I know it, Algy, and you must teach me, each day, to seek that joy, for I am very weak, and feel helpless as a child. I have worshipped idols, and knew not that it was idolatry, until my heavenly

Father broke them down. He has done well. I do not for a moment murmur."

Algernon looked upon the patient girl, with almost more of admiration than pity. "It is you, Alice," he said, "that even now, are teaching me a lesson, which I pray God may not be learnt in vain."

A hectic flush had risen to the pale face of Alice, but not a tear trembled on her eyelid. She had met her brother on the terrace, and both now walked on in silence, until Mr. Everard, who had only just been made aware of Algernon's arrival, hastened forward to welcome home his noble boy, who at that moment seemed more than ever, the stay and comfort of his declining years; for, he knew, what he would be to Alice, and it was already a great relief to see him at her side.

Some weeks had elapsed, since that welcome return, when, as we have said, Alice and her brother sat beneath the "old oak tree." Algernon had been reading to her, while she worked by his side; but her thoughts began to wander, as memory, reflecting the lovely scene in reality before her, called up images to its surface, which were but phantoms of the past. Algernon knew that thus it often must be, and, ever watchful of his sister's peace, he, at such moments, tried to turn the current of her painful musings, by conversation foreign to such associations. So, now he led her to the wondrous discoveries of

geologists, and soon the well-tuned mind of Alice, responded to the touch, which aroused her from earth, to heavenly things. Algernon spoke of the difficulty of reconciling a system, professing to prove, *death* as antecedent to the fall of man; but Alice reminded her brother, that the angels had sinned before Adam was, and therefore, as sin and death, are declared, in holy Scripture, to be ever inseparable, so death may, then, have passed upon all created life, in that period, or dynasty, of creation, although man, himself, was not yet in being. But, she admitted, that these were deep questions, to be approached with reverence and humility, carefully avoiding every fanciful theory, which could tend remotely to deny, or dispute the revealed word of God. Algernon also remarked, that he had been much struck with a fact, which he had never considered, that light, having been created some days, or periods, before the sun, it was not a mere reflection from that orb, as he had supposed. All which, only convinced him how limited is our reception of either, natural, or revealed religion; how much we should have to learn, and study, when faith has yielded to sight; when we should no longer read, as with stammering lips, the Divine lessons of Jehovah: nor, see only, "through a glass darkly," the surpassing wonders of His creative omnipotence, and of His exceeding love, in those of redemption and grace! Alice,

thought such themes would occupy the purified intelligence of angels, and "saints made perfect," throughout the eternity of their existence. Scarcely had she spoken this, when Mr. Everard was seen hurriedly walking up the grassy ascent towards them, and, immediately, Alice arose to meet him.

"Mr. Graham has just been here, my love," he said, "to tell me that he thinks poor Miss Rodney, can scarcely survive the day. She is quite insensible, lying in a state of drowsy stupor, and I am going at once, to see what we can do for little Dora, in her affliction."

"Oh! let me go with you, my dearest father," exclaimed Alice, "I may be of some comfort to poor Dora, in her melancholy watch. I know what this trial will be to her, and it must be a dreary thing to be alone, by the side of death."

"You must not think of it, Alice," said Algernon, anxiously; "you are wholly unequal to such an exertion, and the sight of Dora's distress alone, would make you ill."

"It would make me more ill, to think of her distress, and not be with her, Algy dear," answered Alice, with a sad, sweet smile.

"What say you, my father?" asked Algernon very unwilling that his sister should be exposed to any additional sorrow.

"Alice is so seldom wrong in her judgment of

what is right, my dear boy," replied Mr. Everard, looking affectionately at both his children, "that I think we must leave her to do as she, herself, feels disposed. All I would urge is, that you drive her to the Rectory, while I walk on without delay."

No further objection could be raised, as Alice, grateful for her father's confidence, expressed herself quite equal to her friendly mission. Mr. Everard, therefore, walked on, leaving the others to follow as proposed.

The Rectory of Glencombe has been noticed in the earlier part of this tale, as once the home of Mr. Everard. For many years past, it had been tenanted by a lady, one of those "old maids" generally supposed to have nothing to do, worthy of an immortal spirit, and, therefore, to be employed for everybody else, lest but for such kind consideration, time might hang heavily on the lonely one; or selfishness absorb the interests of a mind too active to be literally idle. Thus it is, we presume, that, of the whole race of female bipeds, no class are more overburdened with claims of head and heart, than the maiden sisterhood of our country; at least, such among them, whose minds are attuned for higher aims than the frivolous occupations of the world, humbly seeking discipleship with the Lord Jesus Christ; these being often the most laborious and self-denying portion of

society, while few there are who can appreciate their patient, cheerful labour, because, generally speaking, it involves those "odds and ends" of active, or passive benevolence, of which small account is taken, in the great sum of human affairs. Of this class was Miss Rodney, she, who after sixty years of a well spent life, was now unconsciously passing away to that "rest which remaineth for the people of God." Among the many who had claimed her maiden care, was an orphan niece, the only child of a brother-in-law, who, having wasted his inheritance upon the dreadful chances of gambling, died an early victim to its carking anxieties, leaving a widow and family to suffer the penalties of his extravagance. Miss Rodney was first to render aid to the unfortunate, and almost penniless survivors; but briefly did the widow need it, so soon was she laid beside her husband's grave, blessing with her latest breath the sister whose pious influence had thrown a halo round her very sorrows, and who had early led her to seek for herself the source of that light, until her own soul thirsted for the "living waters" which, through the grace of God, became to her as a well, springing up unto everlasting life. Miss Rodney was far from rich, although perfectly independent; but her income being only a life interest upon property entailed upon an elder brother, she had no power to provide permanently for her sister's children. Nevertheless, she

became as a mother to the orphaned family, devoting herself to their instruction; teaching them the great lesson of combining submission to the will of God, with persevering industry. The two elder children were boys, early provided for as agriculturists in Australia; but the little Dora, a delicate girl, became more peculiarly the adopted charge of her generous aunt, who, aware that whenever it might please God to call her home, the poor orphan, humanly judging, would have to walk alone through the difficult and often painful pathway of poverty, had spared no efforts to cultivate her understanding, to strengthen her mind, and above all, to prepare her for the battle of life, by arming her with those religious principles, the "unsearchable riches of Christ," which can never fail to supply every needful blessing for time and eternity. Dora Stuart, thus trained, became all that a loving child could be, to her who had adopted her; and thus the evening of Miss Rodney's life had been gladdened by the affectionate gratitude of Dora, reflecting back upon herself, the sunshine which her own benevolence had imparted so freely to others. The necessity of greater economy, had led her to the retirement of Glencombe, where a friendship of no ordinary character had arisen between the tenants of the Rectory and the Everard family. They had shared with each other every passing joy and sorrow, without an intervening cloud

to chequer the even course of a long tried and confiding intimacy.

It was by the side of Miss Rodney's death-bed, that Alice now stood, hand in hand with Dora, watching the last sleep of their beloved and honoured friend. They looked upon the pallid invalid—for sufferer we can scarcely call her—and almost envied the sweet saint, whose warfare of life was thus “accomplished,” and in whose soul the victory of triumphant grace was achieved. Alice especially felt this ; but she checked the rising wish to “depart and be with Christ,” as the offspring of a murmuring, rather than a resigned, spirit ; and then she endeavoured to draw, from that scene of solemn peace, lessons of Divine instruction, embodied in that wondrous work, which lay well nigh finished, before her, in the departure of a redeemed soul ! Had the dying one never suffered many a heart sorrow ? many a conflict against sin, of which the world knew nothing ? She had warm and generous feelings. Had these never been wronged and disappointed ? She had identified herself with the calamities of others ; had been friend to the friendless ; mother to the orphaned ; benefactress to the poor. And who could be all this, without much patient endurance of difficulties, of counteracted efforts, of misplaced confidence, and of ungrateful requital ? Yet *all these things* had been submissively encountered.

for His sake, who had endured so far more than all for *her*! She had stored them in the records of her life's history, not as merits, but as mercies—as works her Lord had given her to do, and trials He had given her to overcome; and she asked no higher reward for the one, than His own Holy Spirit to do them well; and, in the other, that His own strength might be “made perfect in her weakness.” In herself, she was the unprofitable servant; in Him she was the “adopted of the Father,” and, as she had lived, so was she dying, trusting wholly to the blood of Christ, for the remission of her sins, and to the righteousness of Christ for her admission to the family of God in heaven! All this seemed revealed to the soul of Alice Everard, as an example for her encouragement in patient well-doing; and now, in the fulness of her heart, she knelt down beside the bed of the sleeper, and asked, that, God helping her, she might “do likewise.”

Presently, the silent watchers were aroused by the deep and irregular breathing of the invalid. A few convulsive sighs succeeded, and then, suddenly, every throb was stilled; the happy spirit had taken flight, and the cold, inanimate form alone remained to tell of departed life!

Poor Dora, who had restrained her tears, lest her aunt should wake, and be disturbed by grief no longer in her power to assuage, now threw herself

across the bed, with one cry of anguish, as if once more, to call the spirit back to bless her ; and then, well aware of the full measure of her calamity, she wept such tears as can scarcely unburden a heart which is too full to feel conscious of relief.


It was then that Alice, with all her native energy of mind, threw off every selfish and enervating remembrance, to fulfil the melancholy duties before her. She spoke words of holy consolation to the afflicted girl, without any attempt to strain the fortitude which, for a moment, had so naturally forsaken her. She suffered her to lament ; but told her that Jesus, who had wept with the sisters of Bethany, was equally touched with human sorrow now, and was at God's right hand to plead for the weak in faith, and to sympathise in her own calamity. Dora pressed her hand in silent reply, but soon became so still, that Alice felt almost alarmed. With the servant's aid she raised her, but the poor mourner had fainted, and Alice lost no time in removing her, while thus insensible, from the corpse, round which she lay entwined ; and when Dora recovered her consciousness, she found herself on her own bed, Mr. Everard and Alice administering to her restoratives. When a little more revived, they both endeavoured to persuade her to remove at once to Earlswood ; but the proposal was firmly declined. Alice then wished to remain at the Rectory, but evidently, greatly fa-

tigued, to this her father could not consent; he provided against the alternative, and a warm-hearted neighbour, greatly attached to Dora, was soon in the house to supply his daughter's place. Daily, however, was Alice seen returning to the house of mourning. She carried no cross in her hand; she wore no peculiar dress or badge of mercy to proclaim her missions of benevolence. The cross was in her heart, and she was clothed in the garments of true humility and unostentatious piety. The providences of God directed her footsteps, and the work which He gave her to do, that she did in all simplicity of heart as "unto the Lord."

The chief mourner, professedly, at Miss Rodney's funeral was her elder brother, from whose property her annuity had been derived. This had always been a source of irritation in his mind; for, although he had enough and to spare, he wanted all, and thought it hard to be burdened with claims, however small they were in proportion to the riches entailed upon himself. He had frequently reproached his sister for supporting the children of an extravagant man at his expense, and when Miss Rodney pleaded against the injustice of such a charge, he defended it by saying, that if she had more than she required, she ought to give it back to her own brother, from whose resources it was drawn. All this, however, she had met with Christian forbearance, sorrowing far more

for the spirit which could thus covet the orphan's bread, than annoyed by the vexatious disputes which, now and then, disturbed her peace. So heavy had been her claims, that it was only by dint of great economy, she had saved about two hundred pounds for her beloved charge, and this legacy was all that poor Dora could claim for her support. Her case had been laid before her uncle, with caution and delicacy, by Mr. Everard, who entreated him to settle a small annuity upon her, as a resource in the event of illness or distress. But Mr. Rodney only replied, haughtily, that, as he believed his sister had bestowed upon her a most excellent education, paid, in fact, out of his own property, he could do no more for her ; but hoped she would find no difficulty in soon procuring an independent situation as governess, in the meantime she had funds for her temporary maintenance.

The funeral was over. The uncle had departed, and Dora, a delicate-looking girl, scarcely twenty years of age, was left to encounter the rough storms of life, without a home, or one bright prospect, to sustain her, under the accumulated sorrows and anxieties of her desolate position. But she had been trained in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord ;" her faith reposing on His blessed promises, she felt that, however dark was the way before her, His hand would lead her through it, that He would never leave



her, nor forsake her. She dared not yet dwell much upon the past. Its happy reminiscences might unnerve her for present exertions; but she resolved, with God's blessing, to prove worthy of *her* who had laboured so faithfully to make her so, and to instil within her mind those deep principles of vital piety which she was now called upon to exercise and prove.

Mr. Everard, on the morning after the funeral of his old friend, walked early to the Rectory, his benevolent heart full of sympathy for the orphan in her bereavement. He found Dora already employed in her melancholy task of packing up for removal. She was calm and resigned; and there was a dignity in her sorrow which struck Mr. Everard as remarkable in one so young; but it was the very greatness of her calamity, which had braced her mind to a resolute endurance of its consequences. She received Mr. Everard with grateful respect, expressing a deep sense of all his fatherly kindness towards her. After some further conversation of a desultory nature, Mr. Everard said, "And now, Dora, I am come to ask what we can do for you? I have allowed you to have your own way hitherto; but I must now have mine, and take you back with me to Earlswood."

"Gratefully will I accept your kind invitation, Mr. Everard, for a little while; but I must speak to you of the future, and feel sure that you will advise me

for the best." Dora seemed for a moment unable to proceed, but, struggling against her emotions, she continued " You know, sir, that my dear, dear aunt for many years past, has been preparing me for this very trial ; I am anxious to fulfil, as far as possible, what I know would be her wish could she now express it. She spared no pains to educate me, that I might become independent through my own resources, and the time is come, when these must support me."

Mr. Everard looked at her with his sweet, bland smile, almost surprised by the fortitude manifested in her calm self-possession. " All this is as it should be, my dear Dora, and it was upon this very subject, I came, thus early, to talk with you. I have already found a situation which may do as a beginning ; but you must allow yourself a little time before you enter upon any such engagement."

Poor Dora felt a shudder pass through her frame, at the prospect of realising so immediately, what she had, nevertheless, most earnestly desired to obtain ; but she shrank not from it, and replied, firmly, " I fear, dear sir, that any such indulgence just now might weaken my purpose, and render the trial even yet more difficult to meet. To-morrow I can leave this dear home, and after a few days' rest at Earlswood, I trust that I may feel quite equal to enter at once, upon my novel duties, if required ; in which I

will endeavour to do credit to your recommendation, and to *her* memory who prepared me for them, both by precept and example." She said this with a faint smile, tears trickling down her cheek, and then added, "The Father of the fatherless will help me, I know; and you too, will pray that He may bless me."

Mr. Everard was deeply touched by the faith and simple earnestness of the young Christian before him. He replied with much feeling, "The Lord *will* bless thee, Dora, and keep thee in all thy ways. Fear not, for He is with thee."

Both remained silent for a few moments, and then Dora, looking up timidly, asked, "Where is the home you have so kindly found for me, dear Mr. Everard? And how many pupils shall I have under my charge?"


"You will have but one, my child," replied Mr. Everard, smiling; "and she will be tolerably tractable, I dare say. Earlswood will be your home, and Alice your pupil, if you will undertake the task, and agree to the terms I offer you."

Dora looked amazed; but in a few moments she seemed to comprehend the generous proposal, and she replied, shaking her head, "No, no, Mr. Everard, that cannot be; indeed, it is better that I should at once exert the talents on which, so far as it be God's will, I must henceforth rely for my support."

Mr. Everard was, however, serious in his proposal ; not, of course, to give Alice a governess, but he had for some time past, felt very anxious to find for her, a companion of suitable age and similar pursuits, to be a sister in her loneliness, and which recent circumstances had rendered more than ever, not only desirable, but imperative. The only difficulty had been to meet with a mind of congenial sentiments, in all the essentials of intimate companionship, without which there would be in such a tie, more of restraint than sympathy or pleasure. But in the character of Dora, was peculiarly combined all that could blend harmoniously with that of his precious Alice ; and he, therefore, now looked upon the young orphan as a boon given him of God, to be cherished as another child ; while, on the other hand, he rejoiced in giving a home to the homeless one ; thus averting from the high-minded girl, those deep trials for which she had so nobly prepared herself. All this was explained to Dora, whose heart responded in deepest gratitude to the generous kindness of Mr. Everard, while inwardly acknowledging the wonderful interposition of her heavenly Father, in thus providing for her beyond all that she could have asked or desired. The sudden revulsion of feeling, however, from anxiety to comparative relief, was almost more than she could bear, and the heart that was so strong in its desolation, seemed, for a moment, bowed

down beneath an overpowering sense of mercies received. Further preliminaries were soon arranged for Dora's removal to Earlswood on the following day, and Mr. Everard, with a lighter heart than he had for some time known, hastened home to tell Alice of what he had done ; nor was he disappointed in the result. Sincerely attached to Dora, nothing could have given her much more pleasure, and Mr. Everard felt already, in the affectionate acknowledgments of his beloved child, that his mission, thus doubly blest, had not been a fruitless or mistaken one.

A few days subsequently to these events, Mr. Everard was walking with Algernon on the terrace, and appeared so unusually depressed, that every effort which the latter exerted to amuse and cheer him, seemed unavailing. At length, after a silence of some minutes, he asked, in an anxious tone, "What think you of Alice, my dear boy? Her spirits are better, but her strength seems failing, and at times she looks so ill, that I cannot but feel very uneasy about her, and hardly know what is best to be done. Mr. Graham strongly recommends change of scene. Aberystwith is now out of the question—its very name would recal painful associations ; but I have serious thoughts of taking her to the Continent. We might go up the beautiful Rhine without much fatigue ; its exquisite scenery would divert her mind,



and the change of air, tend to invigorate her general health. Mr. Spencer would, I believe, very gladly take my duties here for two or three months."

"The very plan above all others, my dear father, that would most conduce to her relief; one which, I am sure, would please her on every ground. Alice does look ill, and the patient, meek submission with which she struggles to overcome her natural sorrow, is so touching, that I often look at her until I feel as if my own heart would never be happy again. How any man could renounce the love of such a being, I cannot imagine; but sure am I, that he was not worthy of her; and all is for the best, I am persuaded, if Alice herself will but think so, and cheer up."

"So far as it is the will of God, she does think so, Algy," replied Mr. Everard; "but we must talk of this no more; it sometimes sorely tries my faith."

Father and son now returned to the house, and both felt it a great relief to see Alice no longer alone in her employments. Dora Stuart was reading to her as they entered the breakfast-room, and the two girls, drawn to each other, not only by congenial sentiments, but through afflictions in which they could mutually sympathise, each one made an effort to be cheerful, that the other might be diverted from painful memories. In the evening of that day, Mr. Everard told Alice of his proposed expedition to the

Rhine, to which she listened with more evident interest than she had done for some time past, where her pleasure was principally concerned. Her father, who had never yet learnt to disconnect Lady Gertrude Austyn from his own family, expressed an earnest desire that she should be requested to accompany them, as on every ground the change might materially benefit her, and her society, add greatly to the pleasure of the whole party. Alice, immediately, offered to write to her their united invitation ; and this point being settled, charts, engravings, and books of descriptive scenery, illustrating the route proposed, so beguiled the whole party from their sadder memories, that Mr. Everard especially entertained sanguine hopes that he had, indeed, decided upon a change most acceptable to his drooping child ; while the bright and buoyant mind of Algernon, rising to a yet higher point of hope, sketched out such glowing pictures of all that they were to hear, and see, and do, that even Dora was amused into many a smile, and all felt something like a gleam of returning happiness, which had been so sadly overshadowed by those dark clouds never, perhaps, wholly to be dispersed again.

Lady Gertrude addressed her reply, to the general invitation received through Alice, to her uncle, expressing unaffected regret that she could not accompany the Earlswood party in their delightful wan-

derings abroad, being in daily expectation of her father's arrival. Nevertheless, she proposed passing a few days with them, if any suitable escort could be found to take her in charge from London. Her whole letter was so, evidently, written in depressed spirits, that Mr. Everard at once, saw that the heart of the writer was ill at ease. Alice fully sympathised in this conviction; and, notwithstanding their late painful estrangement, which had almost insensibly arisen between them, she now yearned to welcome back the dear companion of her happier years, advocating her return to Earlswood, as anxiously as she had of late declined it. At length, it was decided that Algernon should go to London on the following day, to be her escort, and that, unless Lord Errisford arrived, Gertrude should remain with them until the time of their departure for the Continent. Anxious, however, to meet her cousin free from all painful restraint, Alice wrote most unreservedly to Gertrude, entreating a candid reply, in explanation of those vague doubts which had so greatly distressed her. This was not done without effort, as involving subjects so immediately connected with Ernest Willoughby; but she felt it was due to Gertrude that there should be no secret misgiving against her; while she, too, would feel it an inexpressible relief, could she be assured that she had not taken part with Mr. Grey, in the influence which had been

exerted to separate Ernest and herself. To this, she urged a faithful reply, before they could meet, that the subject might never personally be mentioned between them; for, although it was her duty not to foster its remembrance, it was impossible, as yet, to think of it without deep anguish of heart.

Lady Gertrude received this letter alone. Her heart beat, and her cheeks flushed, as she read what so vividly recalled, both her happiest days and her most unhappy reflections. What could she do? She had solemnly promised Mr. Grey never to reveal the secrets of the Church whose servants were bound to win souls to the pale of safety and salvation, through any means, however questionable they might in themselves appear. This had taken so strong a hold upon the conscience of Gertrude, that she felt a superstitious dread of retracting a promise, although it was one involving so much duplicity. It had already made her miserable, and the letter of Alice seemed to fill up the measure of her bitter self-reproach. But the arch-fiend never loses his opportunity of abetting those who affect to resist his temptations in their own strength. Pride rose to the heart of Gertrude, in place of repentance, and while conscience struggled hard to bend her heart to prayer; pride, alas! obtained the victory, as it urged her against all concession. Alice had no right after all to accuse her, neither was she bound to defend

herself from that accusation. Her own motives had been good and pious, she had obeyed the voice of the Church, speaking to her through its commissioned delegate, and therefore she would never betray what was beyond her power to remedy or remove. In this spirit, then, she replied to Alice, expressing herself the aggrieved party, by suspicions unworthy of defence; and that whatever calamity had arisen, in which none more than herself had sympathised, it had never been, even remotely, under her control. How could she influence the affairs of the Church? Ernest Willoughby had been actuated, in the great sacrifice he had made, by the holiest convictions that it was required of him; and, however severe had been its execution, he could not have cancelled his own dedication to God without sacrilegious perjury, and consequent ruin to his soul; a motive which Alice herself, would appreciate when time had softened the trial, in which she was necessarily and painfully involved.

To the upright, well-instructed mind of Alice this reply was vague, insincere, and wholly unsatisfactory; for it rather confirmed than removed her suspicions, of having been, indeed, deceived by one so long and so tenderly trusted. This was a fresh drop of bitterness poured into her full cup of sorrow, but it still remained a secret within her own bosom. With a deep sigh she destroyed the letter, nor were

its contents ever known to others. Algernon was on his road to London when it was received, and although Gertrude would, under all circumstances, gladly have made excuses to decline her visit, she could not well do so, having herself proposed it, and given Algernon the trouble of a long journey to meet her wishes. Alice was first to welcome her arrival at Earlswood, anxious to manifest no angry remembrance of what had passed, although its impression remained, greatly to lessen the pleasure of seeing her. On the other hand, Gertrude, expecting a cold reception, had resolved to show herself offended; but when she caught sight of Alice in the hall, awaiting her, pale as a marble statue, the tearless eye, once bright with the gladness of hope, now heavy in its expression of an inward sorrow, patiently endured, she started, amazed at the change which grief had thus wrought in one too young for time to have bowed the form, or to stamp decay upon the face. She sprang from the carriage, every feeling of pride swept away by the one overwhelming thought that *she* had taken part in the sad wreck before her. In a moment Alice was clasped fondly as ever to her affectionate heart, and the words, "My own dear Alice!" burst from her lips; recalling tones and words of other days, which fell like music on the ear of that stricken one, and she, too, at that moment, forgot all else, save that Gertrude was once more re-

stored to her, after a long and eventful separation, unchanged at least in warm and generous feelings. All this passed more quickly than we could write it. Mr. Everard, too, soon welcomed back his lost child, as he called Lady Gertrude, and leading the way to the drawing-room, the whole party assembled there, where Dora had remained alone, not to intrude upon the meeting of the cousins.

The next few days passed more cheerfully than could have been expected ; but it was evident to all that Gertrude was not what once she had been ; the spirit of her mirthful nature had given place to the moody fitfulness of an abstracted mind. That she was unhappy all could see, but none could fathom the cause. Mr. Everard attributed it to the unsettled state of her religious views ; Algernon suspected her of attachment to Mr. Grey ; and Alice more rightly judged that it arose from a consciousness of some secret self-reproach, combined with the estrangement towards herself, necessarily consequent upon the past, however painful to them both. Gertrude appeared always more at ease with her uncle than with any other member of their little circle ; she frequently made excuses to be alone with him, and at such times Mr. Everard endeavoured to improve such opportunities, by leading her mind to those great truths of Christianity, which he saw had been undermined by the subtleties of an unsound

theology. To such lessons Gertrude ever listened with attention and interest ; but she rarely made any comment on them, evidently anxious to avoid religious discussions, remarkable in one naturally most unreserved and inquiring. But she was still too much the pupil of Mr. Grey to venture far upon forbidden grounds of controversy, and in such reserve was acting upon his latest injunctions, communicated to her in a long farewell letter, (written the day after their last interview,) announcing his immediate depart from England, with Ernest Willoughby, under circumstances which precluded him from seeing her again. The whole letter was dictated by such deep and earnest interest towards her ; was so full of anxious apprehensions and solemn caution, lest she should be again drawn away from the pure doctrines of the true Church, in which her faith was sealed, that it produced an impression upon her mind amounting almost to a superstitious dread of the powers vested in the Church, to bind her soul captive to its own sinfulness, if she ventured to dispute its authority, and so forfeit its absolution, by yielding to those inward convictions, which, in spite of all such fears, often urged her to a right reception of the truth.

The intercourse between herself and Alice, did not continue as the first meeting seemed to promise, nor was it, perhaps, possible that it should do so ; both

avoiding everything like confidential interchange of thought or feeling. Lady Gertrude felt this estrangement most deeply, and in one of her most wretched moods, she resolved to acknowledge all that had passed to Alice, for she could bear this restraint no longer. Conscious as she was that nothing could wholly vindicate her own conduct, yet she was fully aware that Alice did her injustice, and that a confession of all the circumstances under which she had been induced to strengthen Ernest in his terrible resolution, would at least go far to exonerate her from the worst suspicions of her cousin. She knew, however, that this might cost her much, as she would have to communicate it to Mr. Grey, in whose estimation it would, doubtless, appear like the betrayal of a sacred trust ; nevertheless, she had quite made up her mind to the more upright course, let the consequences to herself be what they might. But all this acted upon the peace of poor Gertrude, which, added to some undefined apprehension respecting her father, and the perpetual recurrence of melancholy reflections, in which Alice and Ernest, the Mowbrays, and Mr. Grey, were alternately associated, so preyed upon her spirits, that her inward wretchedness could no longer be wholly concealed from the observation of others.

The Earlswood party had now all retired to rest, and Gertrude only waited until sure that Alice was

alone, to seek an interview with her, before she slept that night. Something, however, brought Alice unexpectedly to her room. Gertrude had been weeping bitterly, and traces of tears were still evident on her face, as she sat in her dressing-gown, listlessly awaiting the time when she might be sure of encountering no third person. Alice was about to draw back, feeling that her visit might appear intrusive at such a moment, but Gertrude immediately arose, and putting her arm around her, drew her to where she had been sitting. Alice, however, only anxious to avoid all discussion which, she thought, could only now lead to more painful results, continued standing, and Gertrude, thus repulsed, drew her arm away. Alice, after a pause, merely explained the reason of her being there, and, with some degree of coldness, expressed a fear that she had intruded. Gertrude looked at her reproachfully, and then replied, "It was my purpose to seek *you*, Alice, had you not been here ; *I*, therefore, might have been the intruder ; but what I meant to say would now, I believe, be ill timed, I need not therefore detain you."

"I would willingly hear anything that could give comfort to either of us," said Alice ; "but I scarcely hope this could be at present, and needless explanations might only tend to aggravate painful feelings on both sides ; unless, indeed, you think the power is mine to serve you, for I see that you are unhappy."

"I have many causes to make me so," replied Gertrude, mournfully, "and one, not the least, is that you no longer love me."

"I must ever *love* you, Gertrude," said Alice, gently; "but if not as once I did, you can scarcely be ignorant that the fault is your own."

"It may be more my misfortune than my fault," replied Gertrude, in a tone of irritation. "You are unjust, Alice, for you pre-judge, and then reproach me; whereas, did you know all, you might forgive my motives, at least."

"Are you quite sure that these were influenced by a righteous principle?" asked Alice; "that your *affections* moved them not?"

This was too much for Gertrude; she drew herself up, and, looking sternly at her cousin, she said, "Is it possible that *jealousy* has stirred you to such a groundless taunt as that?"

"Nay," replied Alice, soothingly, not aware how greatly her words had been misunderstood, "I have neither right nor reason to be jealous; and the charge is altogether foreign to my remark. But, if you touch upon the subject of *jealousy*, I wish you manifested less of it in your conduct towards poor Dora."

"Jealous of *Dora*?" exclaimed Gertrude, inexpressibly surprised. "I admire her far too much to feel jealous of her; but if you allude to my

remark of this morning, I again repeat, that a time was, when no human being could so wholly have engaged you, as to make you forget that I am here only for a few days, and might therefore claim, without a feeling of jealousy, some portion of the time now devoted so exclusively to another. But, let us say no more, Alice, we had better never meet again than be thus together without love or confidence."

Alice gave a deep sigh, and seemed to pause, as if half doubtful whether she should say more, or leave her cousin without reply ; but Gertrude, now roused to something like resentment, waved her away, and, sitting down, burst into a flood of tears.

Alice looked at her with both pity and surprise, but merely said, "I will go then, Gertrude, and only regret that anything tempted me to seek you in your present state of temper ; for it seems too truly, that we can only now meet to make each other very wretched."

Gertrude raised her bowed head, exclaiming, "*Temper !* oh ! how little do you know me !" But Alice had left the room, and the friendship of years was crushed beyond repair.

Alice, whose physical strength was unequal to any excitement, sat down when again alone in her room, faint and exhausted, feeling as if every hope of her life, one by one, was to wither away and die ! She had in reality deeply wronged Lady Gertrude,

who, with all her faults, was incapable of the temper attributed to her, so true it is that when confidence has been uprooted, suspicion soon supplants it, spreading poison around the soil in which it lives. Thus within the mind of Alice Everard mistrust and doubt cast their baneful shadows over every word and action of Lady Gertrude, unjust as they were ungenerous, but Alice knew not herself.

On the other hand, Gertrude, painfully aware of both, equally, in this instance, wronged her cousin, believing that, in the bitterness of an unmerited sorrow, she had become susceptible of jealousies unworthy of herself, and cruelly unjust to others. But here Gertrude was mistaken, for Alice, in allusion to the source of her alleged motives, glanced solely at Mr. Grey; while Gertrude, in her very innocence on such grounds, not unnaturally misunderstood it, as having reference to Ernest Willoughby; an imputation as revolting to herself as it was remote from the thoughts of Alice. All these counter currents militated against any approach to reconciliation, and acting injuriously upon the minds of both, the estrangement of the cousins became complete. How different had been the result, could Alice have read the heart of Gertrude when she drew her that evening to her side, resolved, in all humility of spirit, to lay bare her inmost soul, and seek forgiveness where she had been led to deceive and wrong her. But she had

unkindly repulsed her, mistaking the grounds of a good and affectionate impulse; and had, unconsciously indeed, broken the last link between them, and aroused feelings of angry disappointment in place of peace and mutual forgiveness.

It was now impossible that anything like free or even friendly intercourse could longer exist between the cousins. Lady Gertrude, deeply feeling this, made excuse for her immediate return to London. Mr. Everard alone of all the party opposed this sudden determination, for even Algernon, suspecting something like the truth, refrained from any attempt to prolong a visit, which he saw embarrassing and painful both to Gertrude and his sister. It was, therefore, arranged that on the following morning, he should escort her back to the busy metropolis.

So the Lady Gertrude departed, clinging only with fond regret to her uncle, who, dearer to her than ever, seemed now the sole remaining tie to bind her affections to the sweet memories of Earlswood!

CHAPTER XVII.

“ Like him whose fetters dropped away,
When light shone o’er his prison ;
My spirit touched by mercy’s ray,
Hath from her chains arisen.
And shall a soul Thou bid’st be free
Return to bondage? Never !
Thou, oh ! Lord, and only Thee,
I live for now, and ever !”

SACRED MELODIES.

ABOUT twenty miles south of Lanciano, in Abruzzo Citeriore, is a small village on the coast, once called Valetta, and here, in a low room of one of the neatest houses which that remote place afforded, sat two young men earnestly engaged in the study of the holy Scriptures. Both were apparently about the same age ; the shortest, perhaps, a few years the senior ; and both wore the plain black dress of English clergymen, although without any distinctive pe-

culiarity, such as is now assumed by those calling themselves Anglo-Catholic, imitated, probably, from that of the Romish priesthood. The eldest was, indeed, a Church of England missionary, awaiting only the arrival of a merchant vessel from Alexandria to a neighbouring sea-port, in which he had engaged a passage on his return to England, after a laborious mission of five years at Jerusalem, Aleppo, and Cairo. His companion was Ernest Willoughby, who had two years previously, as we have seen, accompanied Mr. Grey to Rome; there he accidentally met a college friend, and although, when at Oxford, they were by no means on intimate terms, they were subsequently drawn together by that strong claim of national brotherhood, which seldom fails to unite even strangers to each other when meeting on a foreign soil. The health of Ernest had derived no benefit from the air of Italy; and his spirits became even yet more depressed by the exciting scenes of the imperial city, for which he had neither inclination nor physical strength. Even the society of Mr. Grey failed to administer comfort, and, although he became more and more devoutly rigid in the discipline of the Church, his gloomy apprehensions only increased; for, while anxious to obey to the letter, every prescribed means of sanctification, doubting nothing of their efficacy to spiritualize a truly pious mind, he suffered such lassitude of heart and soul in all his

religious duties, that they seemed but to aggravate a perpetual warfare, between an earnest desire to be holy, and bitter self-reproach, that the means of holiness were to him but as means of increasing condemnation. Fasting had ceased to be a mortification, for he felt no inclination for food ; the penance was rather to eat than to forbear ; Mr. Grey, therefore, urged upon him that of the hard pallet,* recommended as a substitute in self-denial, as presenting a full refreshment from that rest, for which his outworn mind and wearied body, most yearned to enjoy. Alice Everard seemed perpetually present, like a spirit haunting him, in silent, uncomplaining sorrow, which his own hand had been compelled to inflict, and painful misgivings would often rise to question, after all, the righteousness of the infliction. He had confessed this to Mr. Grey, who too well understood the ordeal of such feelings not to sympathise in them ; but he could only press upon him more strenuous exertions to overcome the assaults of Satan, promising that all these things would but tend to his final triumph, if he persevered in a course of holy obedience. Such was the state of his mind, when Ernest Willoughby met his former fellow collegian, and, under such circumstances, he gladly consented to accompany him on a proposed tour to the Holy Land, where so many objects of touching in-

* Froude's Remains, vol. i., pp. 30—44.

terest might divert him from his inward wretchedness. To this he was strongly encouraged by Mr. Grey, who had many reasons for urging it. Engaged in private affairs of his own, apparently of a mysterious and secret character, he frequently felt that Ernest was a restraint upon him, requiring more of his time than he could well devote from the claims of higher duties ; and, apart from himself, the prospect of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem seemed, above all other, the best calculated to give tone to the weakened mind of his friend, as directing both his heart and imagination to the very source of spiritual adoration that would inspire a sense of the majestic character of Christianity, symbolized in the sacraments of the Apostolic Church. But who can compass the ways of the Lord ? Who can limit or direct the achievements of His grace ? The wisdom of this world is "foolishness with God," and the designs of man are brought to nought by the power of the Holy Ghost, if they tend not to the fulfilment of God's purposes. Mr. Grey had accomplished the fatal perversion of Ernest Willoughby, from the pure doctrines of evangelical Christianity, while every day the tendency of his lessons set more and more directly towards the Roman Catholic faith, persuading him that in all essentials it differed nothing from that of all true-hearted Anglicans. So, when in Italy, he had assured him that he might unite with the Christians of Rome in their

religious services, without any dereliction of duty as an Anglican clergyman, the few Protestant places of worship throughout the Papal States being inadequate and unfit for the ministrations of the priestly office. All this he believed, and there were times when kneeling in the "dim religious light," beneath the splendid dome of St. Peter's, and before that magnificent altar, round which the fragrant incense arose as a "sweet smelling savour," that a solemn awe would steal over his senses, and lead his soul captive to the enchantments of those idolatrous ceremonies. The journey to Palestine being decided, he was not long in making preparations for leaving Rome, as it was necessary to limit, within the smallest compass, his travelling baggage, leaving his books and all heavy articles behind him. In a few days, he and his Oxford friend, embarked for Alexandria, and thence travelled by easy stages to Jerusalem. Oh! how his heart bounded when he found himself, indeed, standing upon the very ruins of that devoted city, where every inch of ground proclaimed the wondrous history of man's redemption, and the awful sacrifice by which it was purchased, in the ignominious death of the Redeemer!

His companion, however, whose chief object of travel was to visit the banks of the Nile, and whose heart was less touched by the associations of Judea, remained but a short time in the Holy Land, anxious

to reach the Egyptian river before the summer was further advanced. But Ernest, who was too deeply interested to leave it only cursorily explored, determined upon a longer sojourn; and having accidentally met with an English missionary, whose intelligent mind and sterling principles soon won upon his esteem, it was arranged that for a short time he should become his guest. But he left him no more. Mr. Monteith became not only his companion and friend, but his instructor in the Hebrew and Syriac languages; this led to a closer study of the Holy Scriptures than Ernest had ever before attempted, and frequent were the discussions between the two students, whose views were, at first, so greatly at variance. At length, Mr. Monteith challenged Ernest to a controversy on the doctrine of the atonement, embracing also that of justification by faith, and it was in preparation for this, when he could command no access to uninspired writings in reference to the subject, that the "Word of God" became to him the "power of God unto salvation." And where was Ernest Willoughby when thus the Gospel was revealed to his soul, like light to the eyes, from which thick scales of darkness had fallen? Was he surrounded by the splendour of architectural magnificence, the pompous array of costly robed priests, or the gorgeous and imposing ceremonies of a carnal religion? No; he was beside the brook Kedron, in the lonely garden of Gethse-

mane, kneeling near the very ground on which the Saviour suffered His last mortal agony, "the just for the unjust;" betrayed by a "familiar friend," deserted by beloved disciples, the heavens His only canopy, the earth His only pillow. *There* Ernest knelt, and wept, and prayed; *there*, for the first time, he felt that the Church of God was not limited to a "house made with hands;" it was in the wilderness, if one repentant sinner, one converted unbeliever, worshipped there in "spirit and in truth;" it was where the contrite offered the sacrifice of a "broken heart;" where faith was the censer from which the prayers of that heart rose as incense to the throne of God! and *there* did Ernest feel how worse than vain, indeed, were all those "beggarly elements" which substitute the "material for the immaterial!" But now he cast them off like fetters which had enslaved his soul, and roused himself from the lethargy of unhallowed delusions. Wherever the missionary labours of Mr. Monteith called him, there Ernest accompanied him. His health strengthened, his mind regained its vigour, and his natural energy returned, while constantly exercised in useful studies and active engagements; and *then* he learnt in what real self-denial consisted. He no longer enervated his physical system by fastings such as required supernatural powers to endure. He was "moderate in all things;" he nourished the body,

that it might support his mind to bear the fatigue of an active and often arduous career ; and in proportion to a soul "healed of its infirmities," his countenance resumed its natural expression of intelligence and energy, although there was a grave and settled seriousness on his face, which told something of his heart's history, that disappointment had prematurely given to youth an impress of time's visitation. He had unfolded that history to Mr. Monteith, who, ever faithful to his holy commission, received his confidence with sympathy, while Ernest himself became an object of his tenderest concern, as a charge given him of his Lord, that he might, with God's blessing, aid in his recovery from error. On the other hand, Ernest, grateful for his affectionate and patient exhortations, delighted in rendering him assistance in his laborious duties ; and thus they became mutual blessings to each other, united by bonds of more than brotherly regard. A year had passed away, when Ernest wrote to Mr. Grey a full and free confession of errors renounced, entreating him, with all the earnestness of a long tried friendship, to search the Scriptures unadulterated by human systems, that he, too, might receive the light of the Spirit. To this he never had reply. With equal candour he also wrote to Mr. Everard, asking forgiveness for the pain he had caused, under the influence of an unholy delusion, imploring his intercession with his beloved

Alice, that once more, he might claim her precious love, and prove to her the faithfulness of his deep attachment, which never had been, and never could be, alienated or estranged. He dwelt upon all that he had suffered, aggravated tenfold by knowing that she, too, had been implicated in the bitter anguish of their separation. He asked not, however, to be received back to their affections without a probationary trial of his principles and views; he only asked not to be refused the hope of a future alliance, should his conduct henceforth prove the sincerity of the one and the soundness of the other. He stated his intention of remaining still another year the companion of his missionary friend, to share with him his unremitting labours in the cause of Christ, at the expiration of which, both proposed returning to England, and then he would seek to regain that position in the Church which he had so justly forfeited. To this touching confession, he received a reply such as we may suppose Mr. Everard would write under the circumstances. It was all that a parent's heart could have dictated to a long lost and restored son, assuring him of his perfect forgiveness, his unchanged esteem, and of the pleasure it would afford him to hear frequently and confidentially from him. But he could not hold out the remotest hope that Alice would ever restore to him the claim he once held to her heart and hand. In this her resolve

there could be no interference ; she had expressed her unspeakable thankfulness in his return to the pure faith of the Protestant religion, and a hope, that the time might come when they might meet again ; but nearer or dearer than a brother he could never more be. This was a severe and unexpected blow to Ernest ; but he bowed with perfect submission to what he acknowledged was a just retribution, resolving to gird himself afresh for the struggle of life's real discipline before him, through which he must henceforth walk alone, not by consent, but constrained by the will of God, as the consequences of his past self-righteous unbelief in that most holy will. Sometimes, indeed, memory would recal the sweet visions of his early hope, which might have been realized and blest, had it not been for his own blind and in fatuated perverseness ; and then would he almost weep to feel that such hope was for ever crushed. These vain regrets, however, were seldom indulged ; earth was not his abiding-place, and he would, God helping him, but the more strenuously run for the race which was set before him, pressing on for the prize of his " high calling in Christ Jesus," that when his Master's work was done, he might go to that rest prepared for the people of God, and be reunited to those most dear to him on earth, where sorrow could no more overshadow the unspeakable joy of the redeemed !

It was at this period of his history that he sat, with his missionary friend, at Valetta, as we found them at the commencement of this chapter, deeply engaged in translating parts of the New Testament for some Syriac tracts which Mr. Monteith was anxious to complete. A servant entered the room, to say, that an English gentleman desired to see Mr. Willoughby, and in a few moments Captain Mowbray was announced. He apologised, somewhat coldly, for his intrusion, which was courteously acknowledged by Ernest, as he rose to meet and welcome one well known to him by name and character. The former, then sat down, and at once stated the motive of his visit. "I believe, Mr. Willoughby, that you are an intimate friend of the Lady Gertrude Austyn, and, under painful circumstances, I am induced to ask if you can favour me with her address."

Ernest looked greatly surprised, and, in a tone of unaffected anxiety, replied, "I am, indeed, her friend; nevertheless, am perfectly ignorant of where she is; for it is now some months since I have heard of or from her. Deeply interested in her welfare, may I hope that the circumstances to which you allude are altogether irrespective of anything touching her happiness?"

Captain Mowbray fixed a penetrating look upon Ernest, as he asked, "Are you really ignorant that she is in a convent, somewhere in Italy, placed there

through the interest, and perhaps *influence*, of Mr. Grey, *your own familiar friend?*"

He spoke with peculiar emphasis ; but was at once disarmed of all doubt, by the expression of pain which passed over the countenance of Ernest, as he answered, reproachfully, "I must not retort the inference so plainly conveyed by your words, Captain Mowbray, as your suspicions may be but too natural ; I can only assure you, most solemnly, that I am as ignorant of the fact you assert—if fact it be—as I am sincerely distressed at your intelligence."

"Then have I, indeed, wronged you, Mr. Willoughby," said Captain Mowbray, frankly, holding out his hand ; "and must entreat your pardon for an error grounded solely, upon your known intimacy with both Lady Gertrude and Mr. Grey."

Mutual explanations soon followed. Ernest briefly detailed his own history, from the time of his leaving England, since which, he had heard only once from Lady Gertrude ; and of Mr. Grey he had received no tidings whatever for many weeks past—a silence which might now be accounted for by the fact of his having openly renounced Protestantism. He was far more grieved than surprised by this intelligence, which, however, elucidated much that had appeared to him so mysterious in the conduct of his unhappy friend, during the latter period of their intimacy.

But respecting Lady Gertrude, he was more inclined to hope that of her, Captain Mowbray had been misinformed; nevertheless, if, indeed, deluded by the subtleties of a closely approximating creed, to pass yet further within the pale of the Romish Church, he felt persuaded that Mr. Grey was incapable of using any undue influence in leading her to the conventual life. Of this Captain Mowbray expressed himself as no judge; but entered freely into minor details connected with the subject under discussion. He stated that shortly after Ernest's departure from England, he had accompanied his family to Genoa, resolved never to leave his brother, whose mind had been so fatally misguided by the lessons of his former tutor—lessons, which he did not hesitate to say, were such as could be taught only by one deeply versed in the principles of Jesuitism, even while assuming the character and profession of a Protestant clergyman.

“No, no;” exclaimed Ernest, warmly; “in this you do him cruel wrong. Self-deceived he has undoubtedly been, and therefore has he deceived others; alas! he too successfully deceived *me* into the snare of his own perversion. But *hypocrisy* never found place in his heart or life; he was incapable of professing the faith of one Church, while remaining a member of another.”

“A Jesuit, my friend,” said Captain Mowbray,


smiling, "would not deem such a line of conduct *hypocrisy*. It would be, in his eyes, a system of holy obedience to higher authority, in which, apart from that obedience, he was irresponsible."

"Then never would Mr. Grey become a Jesuit!" exclaimed Ernest.

To this Captain Mowbray made no reply, not doubting the authenticity of his information, and yet unwilling to distress his companion, he, therefore, dropped the subject; and, in continuation of his detail, he said, that his brother, having lingered some months under the genial skies of Italy, had died in perfect peace, acknowledging, with deep repentance, his sinful rejection of the Gospel, while aiming, in his own strength, to attain sanctification through human means—means which had destroyed his physical energies, and given no life or unction to those of his soul.

After a momentary pause, Captain Mowbray continued, "Forgive this digression, not immediately connected with persons mutually known to us. I will now go back to our removal from England. You are, I believe, aware that Lady Gertrude Austyn was my mother's guest, awaiting the daily expected arrival of Lord Errisford. The increasing illness of my poor brother hastened our departure, and it became a question of some difficulty where Lady Gertrude could find a home until her father's arrival.

Many invitations were pressed upon her, but she declined them all. Earlswood, too, was closed against her, the family having themselves left England for the Rhine, I believe, and the house given up to the curate, an unmarried man, officiating for Mr. Everard during his absence. At length, she decided upon going as a boarder to the establishment called 'Sisters of Mercy,' at Rosenfield, where, unhappily, my sister Clara had been placed. This is all I can tell of Lady Gertrude from personal knowledge ; the rest has been derived through a lady, who, until very recently, was in constant correspondence with her ; that Lord Errisford, finding his return to England unexpectedly delayed, sent directions to his daughter to join some friends in London, then about to embark for Leghorn, under whose protection she might travel and remain until he could rejoin her there. He was at that time in Greece, and although, I believe, she has never known it, he was suspected of some treasonable designs against Austria, and was literally captured and imprisoned as a spy in one of the smaller provinces of the Papal dominions, until his Holiness himself commanded his liberation, offering him as a compensation some official appointment, which his Protestant principles did not admit of his accepting. It appears that during this interval, circumstances occurred which rendered the visit of Lady Gertrude at Leghorn extremely unpleasant to her.



The guest of a most designing woman, who was little deserving the confidence reposed in her by Lord Errisford, and persecuted by the attentions of her son, whom she exceedingly disliked, she wrote to Mr. Grey, under cover to the British consul at Rome, entreating him to make every inquiry respecting her father, of whom she could learn no tidings, and to advise her where she should best remove until the Earl's return to Italy. Under these trying circumstances, it was natural that she should more than ever be guided by the influence of Mr. Grey, and that his correspondence should be a source of peculiar comfort and encouragement to her. He left her, however, still in ignorance of his perversion to the Roman Catholic faith, and it was not long before, urged by the most delicate and friendly counsel on the one hand, and persecutions on the other, that she thankfully accepted the repose and safety of a convent, accompanied in her flight from Leghorn (for her removal was no less) by a lady, intrusted by Mr. Grey, to conduct her there ; but where that convent lies, I have in vain endeavoured to discover. I have addressed several letters to Mr. Grey, but without reply ; nor have I been able to learn where or in what monastery he is located ; indeed, my ignorance of his adopted name, as a Jesuit priest, renders it doubtful whether as Mr. Grey he would receive my letters, and those who might direct me

are evidently unwilling to do so. I have also written more than one letter to Lady Gertrude, addressed to her at the convent of St Angela, in the vicinity of Rome, having ascertained that its Lady Abbess, once a Protestant, is nearly related to Mr. Grey, through whose interest she obtained her important office ; it, therefore, appeared probable that to her charge he had consigned her. But still no answer have I received, and can only suppose from such silence that she is not there. I am now come to a yet more painful part of my detail, in which I feel persuaded that I shall have your sympathy and assistance. Lord Errisford, as perhaps you know, upon the death of our late sovereign resigned the embassy which he latterly held, and with it his diplomatic mania. Through some strange infatuation, he became involved in the affairs of Greece, advanced loans to a considerable amount, which has, I fear, greatly embarrassed his own. Subsequently, as I have before stated, he was suspected of *espionnage*, which detained him for a time from his child. At length, however, being honourably acquitted, he arrived at Naples, on his way to rejoin her, where I happened, providentially, to be awaiting letters of some importance, and hearing that an English nobleman, attended only by a servant, had been attacked with an alarming illness, I immediately hastened to the hotel, where, to my surprise and sorrow, I found

Lord Errisford himself, unconscious, and in a state of helpless paralysis. I need scarcely tell you that I did not leave him again, and although he has partially recovered, his once vigorous mind has given place to the imbecility of disease. His memory is greatly impaired, and while it is touching, at times, to hear him call piteously for his child, it is, nevertheless, a mercy, under all circumstances, that, generally speaking, he appears scarcely sensible of her absence; talking of her as if she were close at hand. Yesterday, on looking over a Lanciano Gazette, I saw your name as among the travellers located in the neighbourhood, and through an agent there, I found no difficulty in tracing you to this place. It is impossible for me to leave the unhappy Earl, and yet it is of the utmost importance that Lady Gertrude should be informed of his state with as little delay as possible, that he may be removed to England. What then is to be done?"

"*Done!*" exclaimed Ernest, "I shall go at once to Rome, find out Mr. Grey; and be assured that, if within human possibility, Lady Gertrude shall be found. No convent walls shall deter me from a mission to which I feel bound by a tenfold claim, and God grant it may not be an unsuccessful one!"

Captain Mowbray arose, and, warmly shaking hands with Ernest, expressed his acknowledgments for the manner in which his interference had been

received ; but Ernest assured him that he was personally too deeply interested in the result to merit them on the score of obligation. "Poor Gertrude !" he added, sadly, "who can calculate upon the suffering she may, at this moment, be enduring ?"


"I have no fears whatever for her personal safety, at present," replied Captain Mowbray ; "every influence may be exerted to make her a nun, and all that can give charm to the novitiate will be employed to ensnare her to the veil. But apart from all this, she holds a power over the heart of Mr. Grey, which even his vows to the Church cannot neutralize, and which ensures for her all that can add to her comfort, compatible with life in a convent. Of this she is herself unconscious : an accidental circumstance only revealed it to my own mind, nor would I have betrayed it even to you, but to relieve your mind of what I can well imagine may be an overpowering apprehension."

Suddenly the whole truth flashed across the mind of Ernest, as he recalled the confession once made to him by Mr. Grey, of a deeply-rooted and secret attachment ; and he now only wondered that, beyond a momentary suspicion, he had never entertained a serious idea of the fact. This was, however, a relief beyond expression, as he felt that with such a hold over the mind of Mr. Grey, half his difficulties were removed.

Mr. Monteith, who had withdrawn from a conference which he soon perceived was of a private character, was soon summoned for advice as to the most expeditious mode of reaching the capital ; for, although the distance was scarcely forty miles, the difficulty lay in finding any speedy or direct means of transit from Valetta, an obscure village on the coast. While this was discussing, Captain Mowbray wrote a letter of introduction to an English lady, with whom he was intimate, and whose Christian benevolence he had too often seen exercised to doubt her sympathy in the mission of Ernest Willoughby. He had recently heard of her being at Rome, on a visit to the wife of the British ambassador, whose influence and position might render him a powerful auxiliary in the search for Lady Gertrude, should such assistance be required ; and in the Countess of Manville herself, he felt assured, that she would meet with a kind and most efficient friend, until a suitable attendant could be found, as, of course, if possible to avoid it, she could scarcely travel from Rome to Naples, under the sole guardianship of so young a man. All this had been thoughtfully considered, and in a few hours, Ernest was already some miles on his way to Rome, while Captain Mowbray, accompanied by Mr. Monteith, returned to Naples, and to his noble charge. The companionship of that excellent missionary was highly acceptable to him in

his melancholy task ; his own mind, oppressed with many anxieties known only to himself ; and thus brought together, under no ordinary circumstances of mutual interest, they enjoyed an intercourse as profitable as it was pleasing to both.

In the meantime Ernest Willoughby, with a mind braced up by resolutions, embarked in a righteous enterprise, went on his way with energy and hope. His first object, on reaching the city, was to find out the abode of Mr. Grey ; but not inexperienced in the wily character of Italian agents, he judiciously avoided making any inquiry likely to excite suspicion of his real purpose, well aware that those who might have rendered information would be the persons of all others most likely to mislead him. He remembered having frequently accompanied Mr. Grey in his visits to a poor man, formerly a valet in the Mowbray family, but who, from an accident, had become a helpless cripple, nearly dependent upon the charity of Mr. Grey. After some trouble, he traced him to one of the most obscure streets of Rome, and warmly was he welcomed as the well remembered friend of his benefactor. Without the slightest idea of the Protestantism of his visitor, the man unreservedly told him that Mr. Grey, now called Father Paul, was a monk and confessor in the Jesuit monastery of St. Rosano, which lay in a mountainous district, about a day's journey from Rome, where he




was accounted the most holy of the brotherhood. Ernest, well pleased with his success, amply rewarded the man for his information, and then went on to the palace of the British ambassador, to deliver his letter of introduction to the Countess, who received him most courteously, and soon entered, with deepest interest, into the history of poor Gertrude. She promised to exert her utmost influence with her noble host, that no time might be lost in making efforts to extricate the unhappy girl from her perilous position ; but, scarcely had she spoken, when Lord —— entered the room, and, after a mutual introduction, he, too, entered warmly into the sad history detailed to him by Ernest ; who, anxious to spare Mr. Grey, entreated permission to go to St. Rosano before any official measures were adopted to liberate Lady Gertrude. Lord —— shook his head, very doubtful whether Mr. Grey would render aid in such a mission, especially, if, in alluring her to a convent, he had acted under authority of the superiors of his order ; as, whatever might be his private feelings, these must be coerced by vows of holy obedience, binding his very conscience to any measure of deception and equivocation necessary to advance the interests of the Church. It was, however, decided that a guide should be procured to conduct Ernest to the monastery, as it would be necessary to accomplish part of the journey on foot, through the narrow

mountain pass, leading to the steep acclivity on which St. Rosano stood. In the meantime, his excellency promised to make every inquiry likely to obtain a clue to the abode of Lady Gertrude ; adding, that he made no doubt, all correspondence between herself and her father had been intercepted—Lord Errisford being known as a staunch, though liberal, Protestant. Ernest shuddered at the idea of what this must involve, feeling that the very anxiety, mingled with something like self-reproach for neglect of his child, under circumstances of such dreadful uncertainty, as her supposed silence would inflict, might have caused the fatal attack under which the unfortunate Earl was suffering. And what must this mutual suspense be to poor Gertrude ?

Anxiously to Ernest did the remainder of that day pass ; but a guide being soon found, nothing prevented his leaving Rome early on the ensuing morning, by a public conveyance, which would take him some miles towards his destination, and being a good pedestrian, he hoped to reach the monastery before sunset.

Not many hours after his departure, Lord ——— sought Lady Manville, to tell her of his having just ascertained that a young English girl of rank, whose real name, however, he could not learn, was to take the veil in a few days, at a convent called St. Angela, near Gaeta. He greatly feared that the victim might,



too truly, prove to be the missing Lady Gertrude ; and it became a question of serious consideration, whether to await the result of Ernest Willoughby's visit to Mr. Grey, or at once to obtain an order from the Pope for her liberation. The objection against this was, that should they act upon a wrong conclusion, any such precipitate step might be the means of placing her under yet more rigid surveillance, and so altogether frustrate her release. It was, therefore, decided that nothing more could, at present, be done. Lady Manville, however, whose active benevolence was fully aroused, suddenly recollected that a little deaf and dumb protégée of hers, residing at the palace until she could be admitted into an asylum for such cases, had been, from the time she could run alone, a frequent guest at a convent called St. Angela, where she was at all times a privileged pet among the nuns, as one who could neither hear nor repeat the secrets of the sisterhood, whose monotonous life was often amused by the astonishing powers and intelligence of the young mute, so frequently bestowed as an equivalent to the deep privations consequent upon such an affliction, and there she had learnt the art of talking with her fingers. The child had recently been home to see her parents, poor peasants of the valley in which the convent was situated, and it occurred to Lady Manville that it might be the identical St. Angela, where Gertrude was supposed to be ;

if so, little Ida might give some important information. Possessed of an innate talent for drawing, which Lady Manville had kindly cultivated, as a future resource, she frequently sketched the most graphic representations of what she saw, or wished to describe, as the most rapid mode of expressing herself; and enough was now soon elicited from her to leave no doubt that a lady, not a novice, resided there, and had shown great kindness to the dumb child. Ida sketched the figure of this lady, sitting in a pensive attitude, making Lady Manville clearly understand by signs that she had often seen her weep. All this the more confirmed her suspicion, that Lady Gertrude and this unhappy being were identical. The Countess immediately went to consult the ambassador, who fully acquiesced in her proposal of sending Ida home for a few days; an indulgence too frequently granted to excite either suspicion or surprise. She was to be accompanied by a servant, who would drive her as far as he could safely venture without attracting notice, leaving her to walk from the entrance of the valley to the convent, where she was to take a note, giving her to understand that it must be secretly delivered to the lady boarder, without betraying her errand to any other person, not even to her parents; and afterwards she was to convey the reply, as speedily and as secretly as possible, to the servant, she herself remaining

for a few days with her mother. All this was accordingly done without delay; for such was the horror of Lady Manville at the system of convent tyranny, of which she had heard so many fatal instances, that she felt painfully anxious for the success of her well-devised scheme, to discover and liberate the supposed captive. But in Gertrude's case there was, in reality, no cause for alarm; the Lady Abbess of St. Angela, where indeed she had been admitted as a boarder, being, by no means, harshly disposed. A half-sister of Mr. Grey, and greatly attached to him, she was wholly influenced by his wishes and judgment; and, although she was so far deceived, as to suppose Gertrude placed under her charge as really a postulant, she had promised her brother implicitly to obey his injunctions, that for a time no needless restraints should be exercised towards her. She was, however, neither to write nor receive any letters which were not first secretly forwarded to Father Paul, before posted or received; and if, through her father's supposed silence, they could impose upon her a report of his death, he felt persuaded that the only obstacle against her taking the veil, would then be removed; a step which would afterwards be reconciled by the blessedness of a consecrated life. The Lady Abbess acted accordingly; but a doubt often arose to her mind, that Gertrude was less Ca-


tholic at heart than her brother imagined ; nevertheless, she remembered how often her own feelings had fluctuated before she finally emerged from the prejudices of a Protestant education, and, therefore, she was the more disposed to leniency towards her young charge. Equally unjust was it to accuse Father Paul of any cruel determination to incarcerate his victim at all risks. That her dedication to the Church was his most earnest desire, that it had been the hope of his life for years past, was quite true ; but he was altogether deceived in her state of mind, believing that, but for her strong filial affection, and known opposition of her father against the Roman Catholic religion, she would not hesitate openly to embrace it ; and unfortunately expressing this opinion in a conference with a Jesuit cardinal, he was, as Lord ——— had too truly conjectured, commanded to intercept all correspondence between father and child, and to favour the report of Lord Errisford's death ; he was to cut off every channel through which she might hear the contrary. Time was when Mr. Grey would have revolted against such cruel treachery ; but, alas ! he had surrendered himself, body and soul, to a system in which dishonesty was a virtue, where it could administer to the principles which that system embodies ; and the seared conscience of Father Paul no longer hesitated to obey the dictates of a wretched sophistry, even while

his heart inly bled to think of the deep sorrows in which he was involving the very being dearest to him on earth ; but he defended his motives by the delusion, that these would be but passing trials, preparing her for a life of beatitude both here and hereafter, which would more than compensate for her present endurance, and be his own rich reward !

CHAPTER XVIII.

Hark ! 'tis the convent's vesper bell,
Now little mute thou must be gone ;
Thou'lt find the lady in her cell,
In melancholy mood, alone.

IN a beautiful valley, watered by the Tiber, stood the Convent of St. Angela, surrounded by scenery such as gave a more cheerful appearance to the dwelling of the secluded sisterhood than is usually the case where grated windows, high walls, and massive portals, mark the character of monastic communities. The clear skies of Italy were glowing with the rich tints of sunset, and the soft twilight, like a veil, was gradually stealing over the face of nature, when, in the stillness of a summer's evening, the deep tones of a bell echoing through the air, told that the hour of vespers called the sisters of St. Angela to prayer.



An hour later, and twilight was fast deepening into the shades of night; but the moon, soon rising, threw its silver light over tower and tree, giving a chastened beauty to the scene in that silent hour, which, above all else, perhaps, is calculated to summon sweet memories and saddened regrets within the contemplative mind, more especially when the heart is ill at ease.

In a small, lofty room, gloomy in itself, but furnished with some consideration to the comfort of its tenant, and which overlooked a broad stream of water, whose tiny waves sparkled in the moonbeams, Lady Gertrude Austyn stood, pensively leaning against the grating of the long narrow window, which seemed to imprison her very spirit, while the winged insects of the night were playing in their unfettered liberty of will. She felt oppressed. Her heart well nigh bursting with anxious apprehensions, mingled with unavailing and reproachful regrets, seemed encaged within these convent walls, as if even her very grief could find no outlet, and she yearned to go forth in the free, fresh air, to give vent to tears which might relieve her from its oppressive weight. The moon just then, threw a stream of its pure light upon her face; but, oh! how changed it was! Pale as a lily was her cheek, and her large expressive eyes looked heavy within the circle which sorrow had wrought around them; and her figure looked taller,

because so much more slim than when she left her Earlswood home.

“Oh! my father!” she murmured almost audibly, “if indeed, unworthy as I am, the Lord will hear my prayer, and spare us to each other, never, never, shall we part again on earth. We will go to blessed England, and give up the world, not by imprisoning the body, and chaining down the soul to laws which God has never made, but give it up in our hearts, and seek the peace of true religion, which we have vainly tried apart from it.”

This soliloquy was disturbed by the entrance of the Lady Abbess, who, placing a lamp upon the table, chided her, but not unkindly, for standing so long before an open window. “This is not well of you, my daughter; and much do I fear that the world, or some unhallowed affections are twining around your heart, disturbing the holy peace which you are here to foster and enjoy.”

“Mother,” interrupted Gertrude, impatiently, “talk not to me of peace, when my whole heart is a tempest, which nothing has power to still. I care not for the world, if you mean its paltry pleasures; I never wish to hear the voice of its flatteries again; never more to see its hollow pageantries; but I cannot break away the ties which bind me to a father’s love; alas, perhaps, I ought to say, a father’s memory! Only *convince* me that he is dead, and you

may then make me nun, or novice, for my heart will soon ——” she was going to say “break and be at peace, indeed ;” but she checked herself, remembering that a long lecture would assuredly follow, upon the impiety of her worldly grief, and she merely added, “Dear mother, leave me for to night; I will try and pray that God may make me holier and happier.”

“Presume not, my daughter,” said the Abbess, “to approach God unaided by the blessed Virgin. I pity you as the victim of a heretic education ; but this wilfulness of spirit must no longer be indulged. You have not of late confessed ; you seek not the absolution of the Church ; but I shall send for Father Paul, and he will direct you to the discipline your soul requires.”


“And who *is* Father Paul?” asked Gertrude, turning to the Abbess, proudly.

Her companion looked fixedly at her in surprise, but seeing that she was evidently sincere in her professed ignorance, she cautiously replied, “A holy man, the confessor of a neighbouring monastery, whose ghostly counsel we, too, hold permission to seek when less stringent advisers fail to subdue the rebellious.”

The Lady Abbess left the room ; but in less gentle mood than when she entered. Her receding steps fell not very lightly along the corridor, as she

inwardly muttered, "Father Paul shall either remove this refractory girl, or consent to her novitiate, whether she will or not. She is here neither one thing nor the other ; but I will suffer it no longer."

Gertrude felt relieved when again alone. In a recess, opposite to where she stood, was a crucifix, miserably carved ; the figure painfully imperfect. Above it, in a small niche, was an exquisite painting of a St. Agnes ; the light of the lamp underneath it, fell upon the face, and gave it a sweet expression, while the downcast eyes seemed to look upon Gertrude with pity and love. The contrast of the two struck her forcibly ; she turned away from the picture with a feeling between fear and reproach, remembering how often she had asked that very St. Agnes, whose supposed biography she had read, to intercede for her in heaven. "Poor senseless idol !" she exclaimed, "what can *you* do for me ? Who can intercede for sinners save He who in Himself atoned for sin ?" She turned away, and falling on her knees, beside her couch, pressing her hands tightly over her eyes, as if to shut out every object of sense and sight, she prayed earnestly, and with a self-reproving spirit she implored God's pardon and guidance for the sake of her Redeemer ! Thus had she knelt for some minutes, when she was startled by a gentle knocking at her bolted door ; rising quickly, she listened ; again the knock was so gently



repeated, that she at once opened it, when the dumb child, whom she had observed playing outside the convent just before her own interview with the Abbess, hastily entered, bolted the door after her, and placing her finger upon her lips, as a caution to be quiet, she gave Gertrude a slip of paper, who, immediately taking it to the lamp, read, "If she to whom this will be delivered, be the Lady Gertrude Austyn, let her take courage, for friends are near. She must be prepared to leave the convent on the morrow, and to act with firmness, if she desire to be restored to her anxious father. Implicitly trust the little mute, who will safely convey the reply, 'Yes,' or 'No,'—*not a word more.* Above all, be secret."

To this was neither seal nor signature, and the writing, evidently that of a lady, was unknown. Gertrude, greatly agitated, sat down on the couch, looked attentively at the paper and the child, who, with hands clasped upon her bosom, her sweet, intelligent face, with its warm Italian blood, heightened by the interest and importance of her mission, stood before her, looking anxious; aware that something closely touching her happiness, was the object of her secret message. Lady Gertrude, whose nerves had been shattered by sorrow, trembled exceedingly, although she exerted all her fortitude to be calm. Who could the writer be? What could she know of her father? Why did he not write himself? With

her fingers she asked the child, "Where was Lord Errisford?" A grave shake of her head was the only reply. "Who wrote the note?" With a bright smile, and clapping her hands softly, Ida rapidly spelt, "Lady Manville," adding "*Cara mia*;" and then she pressed her hands against her heart, to testify how good she was, and how much she loved her. Still this gave no solution to the mystery, who could Lady Manville be? Again Gertrude looked at the writing, feeling something like a doubt whether it might not be a *ruse* of that hateful man and his intriguing mother, from whose persecutions she had escaped. She turned mournfully to the little mute, with a sigh so deep as almost to be a sob. Ida, with that quick perception so wonderfully developed in her character, snatched up a piece of paper, and signed for a pencil, which was immediately given to her; she rapidly sketched Lady Manville on a couch, opposite to whom sat a tall young man, both represented as in earnest conversation. Underneath the latter she wrote "Willoughby," "*Valegia*." Gertrude was amazed; equally so, perhaps, by the genius displayed in the sketch, as by the information so graphically imparted; for, so strikingly did it resemble Ernest himself, that, without the name, which the child had evidently learnt by the address on his valise, she might have recognised his person. It was enough. He had tidings of her father; but

had failed to discover her own retreat ; perhaps, even on the morrow, she would be restored to her precious parent. She clasped her hands together, and looking up to heaven, she exclaimed, " The Lord has heard my prayer, and will give me back my own dear father ! " Ida threw her arms around her, kissed her cheeks, her forehead, and her hands ; the only language by which she could express the emotion of her mute sympathy. Gertrude was deeply affected. Fondly embracing the child, she laid her head down upon her shoulder, and weeping freely, soon felt her full heart relieved. All this passed in far shorter time than we could write it ; but Ida, with her instinctive sagacity, gently disengaging herself, tore off a piece of the paper on which her sketch had been made, gave it to Gertrude, and pointing to Lady Manville's note, made signs that she desired a quick reply. Gertrude at once roused herself, and wrote, " Yes, yes ; " folded the paper, and was about to seal it, when Ida, impatient to be gone, hastily took it from her, and putting it in her bosom, nodded her head joyfully, to express hope and consolation ; then, softly gliding from the room, she was soon seen, like a fairy in the moonbeams, hastening from the convent to deliver Gertrude's note to the servant, who waited at a small albergo, on the borders of the valley. Never was her little heart so proud in its happiness as then, for she was fully aware that her message had

been an important one, and that her beloved benefactress had trusted her.

Early on the ensuing morning, Lady Manville, accompanied by an officer in the ambassador's service, in case of need, arrived at the convent gate; the former was immediately admitted to see the lay sister, for whom alone she inquired. Mutual explanations soon followed between the Countess and Gertrude, but not long were they left alone. The Abbess, surprised to hear of such an arrival, hastened to prevent any private interview; but when she found the object of the visit, she positively refused to allow of Gertrude's departure without an order from Father Paul.

"And who is Father Paul, again I ask?" exclaimed Gertrude, angrily. "The man lives not on earth who dares to keep me here, while my own father lives to claim me elsewhere!"

"Father Paul is *my* spiritual director, and must be yours, daughter," replied the Abbess, in anything but a maternal tone; "although better known to you, perhaps, by his worldly name of Cyril Grey. Placed under my charge by *him*, you leave it not without his special command."

Gertrude changed colour, not with fear, for her spirit had regained its native elasticity and strength, but the whole truth painfully flashed across her, that the vague suspicions, so often combated, were now


confirmed. She pressed her forehead with her hand, as if to awaken her mind from a dream. "Has Mr. Grey, indeed, done this?" she murmured, doubtfully. "Yes, and I deserve it all. Lady Abbess, I go, for I have his own word, indited by his own hand, that I might be here as a Protestant boarder, only to await my father's return to Italy. Lady Manville will tell you that he lives, and is at Naples, whither I go without delay; nor dare you attempt to keep me here, against the very will of heaven. Let me go then, grateful for your past kindness, and urge me not to feelings of indignation, which must neutralize my esteem. You have done your duty, and I honour your motives. Mine is now to leave you for a parent's care, and over this you have no authority or power."

The Abbess was perplexed, and remained standing, lost in thought, while Gertrude left the room, but soon returned with the correspondence of Mr. Grey respecting her admittance to St. Angela. Her face was flushed with indignant remembrance of all the deceptions practised against her, by one, too, whom she had so trusted, and almost venerated; she laid the letters down by the side of the Abbess, saying, "I leave you these papers, madam, and with them I throw off the delusions of a blind and sinful infatuation, henceforth to bless God, for ever and ever, that He gave England its glorious Re-

formers, to seal with their very blood England's deliverance from a system which these letters develop, authorise, and prove ; and that, too, under the surreptitious guise of holiness to the Lord. Poor Mr. Grey ! tell him, from me, that, while from my heart I pity him, from my soul I despise him."

The Lady Abbess was, perhaps, too much a novice in her office, to act upon her own responsibility in a matter of such grave importance, and, awed by the dauntless bravery of the young girl before her, she dared attempt no coercive measures to detain her. She had glanced over one of the letters, confirming Gertrude's statement, and felt that she too had been deceived ; but, without allusion to this, she sternly exclaimed, " Go, then, unhappy girl, at your peril go ! but remember that the Church has power to cut you off from every hope of heaven, were you to go to the uttermost parts of the earth. From that awful power there is no escape." So saying she left the room, without another word or look.

Gertrude was too deeply pained to make any comment. Turning to Lady Manville, she declared herself ready to accompany her, anxious only lest any attempt should be made to detain her ; the few things she had brought with her to the convent, might, with the exception of her desk, either be sent after her, or be confiscated, as it suited the will of the Abbess. And thus she left the convent for ever, and



was soon welcomed at the hospitable dwelling of the ambassador; but the reaction from extreme grief and anxiety to such unlooked-for relief, was too much for her weakened frame, and, for a few days, she was confined to her bed with fever and exhaustion.

While all this was passing, Ernest Willoughby was no less anxiously engaged. An accident detaining the mail for some hours on the road, it did not reach its destination till too late for him to attempt reaching the monastery that night, and, although he resumed his journey at sunrise the next morning, it was nearly noon before the dark towers of St. Rosano were in sight. He found no difficulty in gaining admittance to the interior of the monastery. He was shown into a small room, from which every article of comfort was excluded; and, in a few moments, the pale, attenuated form of his once much loved Cyril Grey, slowly approached, clothed in the coarse garb of a Jesuit monk, his countenance almost unearthly in its stern and suffering expression, aggravated probably by an express just received from the Convent of St. Angela, apprising him of Lady Gertrude's sudden departure. Ernest held out his hand to him, and, with a heart overflowing with affectionate reminiscences of the happier past, he said, "Dear Cyril, can this be you?"

But the monk touched not that offered hand; he

stood aloof, and exclaimed, "Is it not enough, young man, that you have become apostate yourself, but you must aid in the apostasy of a daughter vowed to the Church, and, like a thief in the night, steal the dove from her holy rest? I ask you whither is the Lady Gertrude gone, and who has dared to remove her from the Convent of St. Angela without a warrant from the Cardinal Superior of that holy sisterhood under whose charge she was? for, I presume, by your presence here, that in her sacrilegious abduction you are, at least, accessory."

Ernest was amazed. He instantly, however, conjectured that through the active exertions of Lady Manville, Gertrude had been traced, and successfully recovered; but of this he said nothing. "Mr. Grey," he replied, mildly, "my errand here was purposely to ask *you* that question; to know where she might be found, and restored to a sick, perhaps a dying father, who has most right to claim her."

"No earthly parent has right to claim her from the Church, young man. But, alas! they tell me, she is gone willingly; in defiance of that Church, and despising *me*! I who have loved her, suffered for her; sinned for her—oh! how deeply sinned, in leaving her unfettered by those holy restraints that might have bound her to vows, to which I madly thought she might best be won by gentle guile."

The monk sat down, his face livid with emotion. "Ernest," he added, more calmly, "you know not what I have endured to gain the soul of that lovely being to the Church; and yet now, when the work was well nigh accomplished, she returns to her apostasy, to be, perhaps, the bride of an earthly love!"

"Dear Cyril," said Ernest, "we have all been very wrong, led astray by theories and human systems, which had only sand for their foundation, and our faith itself has been wrecked. Let us all return to fix our hopes and our principles on the 'Rock of Ages;' that the fountain of Emmanuel's blood may be to us the true 'laver of regeneration,' the source of our peace and joy! Leave these gloomy austerities; throw off the fetters of a superstitious religion, and come back, Cyril, to the light of the Gospel, and, in active love to God, be free indeed!"

"Tempt me not, Willoughby," replied the father, sadly; "sin is already so deeply rooted in my heart, that no penance, no suffering, no sacrifice, has yet had power to subdue its vile corruptions. For, I tell you, Ernest, that at this moment, the base, groveling passion of jealousy has mastered every holier principle, and taught me what I am; how I have deceived myself in the motives of my zeal, while still a slave to my own selfish, unrenewed affections, which now, as ever, are moved to angry disappointment,

more for my own sake, than for the wrong done to our holy Church ; but they *shall* be mortified : no rest shall refresh these wearied limbs, no sleep shall calm my fevered brain, until sin be conquered, and my soul set free, and then must the Church absolve me !”

The unhappy monk clasped his hands tightly together ; his flushed cheek and glowing eye giving him an expression more of a maniac than a holy recluse.

Ernest was deeply affected. “Cyril, my brother, it is Christ, our great High Priest, who can alone absolve you. Worse than vain are all these bodily inflictions, these carnal desires to subdue sin, or gain salvation. Go simply to the Lord Jesus ; He has told you that ‘His yoke is easy ;’ that He will in ‘no wise cast out’ the penitent, but rather give strength to the weak, and peace to those who seek Him. He has been all this to me, Cyril ; and will be all things to you, if you will but seek Him with a trusting spirit.”

The monk looked at the bright countenance of Ernest, so altered since he last beheld him wasted, and weak, and hopeless. He sighed deeply, and then, starting up, he said, mournfully, “It is too late. Leave me, Willoughby, I beseech you, lest I become a perjured apostate. I can bear no more !” He was about to leave the room, but, turning round, and

holding out his hand, he said, "Willoughby, farewell! forget that you have seen me thus moved, and judge not evil of the Church I serve, because the servant has been unfaithful. In this world we must never meet again; but I will pray for you, and bless you, my brother, for the sake of all we have, once, been to each other."

Without waiting for reply, Father Paul turned hastily away, and was soon heard to close the door of his lonely cell. Ernest felt as if all had been a dream; but, rousing himself, he summoned his guide, and, with a heavy heart, retraced his way through the mountain pass, and soon lost sight of the mountain home of his most unhappy friend. Mr. Grey was never seen again by those who could have told us whether he sought peace at last, or remained a victim to a tyrannous subjection. All we have gathered of his probable fate was through a friend of Captain Mowbray, who, travelling in Italy about two years subsequently, sought shelter from a storm in a monastery called St. Rosano, where, reposing among the dead, lay the mortal remains of a monk, beneath a rough hewn stone, on which was recorded the name of Father Paul, remarkable for the sanctity of his life, and devotedness to the Church of Rome, of which he was a Jesuit member.

Not long was Ernest Willoughby in reaching the ambassador's palace at Rome; nor was he surprised,


after what had passed, to find Lady Gertrude there before him. She warmly welcomed the friend and companion of her earliest years, rejoicing in his return; while anxious to be with her father, she entreated that every arrangement might be made for their journey as speedily as possible. This was accordingly done; a female servant, who had been long in the service of Lady Manville, was engaged to attend upon her, and thus escorted, she left her generous friends, with whom she ever afterwards retained a grateful intimacy.

The meeting between the Earl and his child was a touching sight; sorrow and joy blending painfully in the heart of the latter, so greatly was her father altered; but the smile and the look he gave her was unchanged, and, in a moment, she was clasped to his bosom. His right side was paralysed, and his speech, at times, indistinct. Oh! what a lesson of mutability did that stricken form present! Where was the intellect? where the eloquence, which had arrested a hushed and wondering audience? That intellect was a broken cord, and that voice unable to give utterance to the very feelings which had survived the fearful wreck! Joy indeed still beamed in his eye, when it looked upon the child of his hope and love; but he, nevertheless, appeared unconscious of their long separation, excepting, that whenever she left the room, he seemed distressed, and would tell

her not to stay so long away "as she did yesterday." It was now determined to remove him, without delay, by way of the Mediterranean, as far less fatiguing than over land; especially, as being always fond of the sea, his medical advisers thought it might tend more than anything else to restore him. In less than a week the little party had embarked, consisting of the Earl, Lady Gertrude and her attendant, Ernest, Captain Mowbray, and Mr. Monteith. The season was still mild, and the weather calm, so the little vessel went cheerily on,

"Through the glad waters of the deep blue sea;"

while the invalid daily regained something of his former vigour. He greatly enjoyed the soft sea breezes, as he lay on the deck, soothed and amused by the devoted attentions of his loving child; and never did he seem so drawn away from his own sufferings and mournful regrets as when, with Gertrude working by his side, Captain Mowbray or Mr. Monteith read and talked to him of "Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant;" nor had many weeks elapsed before it became perceptible to all, that, although his physical strength again declined, his mind grew brighter, and his memory more retentive. A yet greater change was wrought within his soul. It was evident that the new life had dawned; that old things were passing away, as, with a child-



like spirit, he laid hold of the Word of God, which became to him, as to many, the "power of God unto salvation." Oh! who shall say, we want the "Fathers" to interpret the language of Jesus Christ, who "spake as never man spake?" and the lessons of apostles, inspired of the Holy Ghost to reveal the will of the Father? Shall we dare assume that such lessons were *imperfectly* dictated—*imperfectly* revealed? Are traditions of men, valuable as they may historically be, to supersede the traditions of prophets and apostles, embodied in the blessed *Bible*? No, God forbid! and would that the time were come when the word of the Lord shall be heard and received by every people, and nation, and kindred, and tongue, and all the earth be filled with the knowledge of Christ, the light of the Spirit, and the peace of God!

Many hours thus passed away on board the *Medora*, as it sped on its homeward track, such, as to Lord Errisford, had never been enjoyed before. One calm evening, unusually warm for October, he lay as usual on the deck, listening to an interesting detail which Mr. Monteith was giving of an Armenian Jew converted to Christianity, under peculiar circumstances, when Lady Gertrude and Ernest, sitting on the other side of the yacht, began singing a German air to the words of a Hebrew melody, most touching in itself, but rendered yet more so by the hour and

the stillness of a calm sunset at sea. Their voices harmonized sweetly together, and so arrested the attention of all on board, that, at length, not a sound was heard save the exquisite music of that mournful hymn, and the soft plashing of the waves against the vessel, as she glided gracefully through the water. Lord Errisford listened with rapt delight ; but, as he looked upon his lovely child, he felt how soon she might be left an orphan upon the world's waste, and yet not fatherless while Mr. Everard was spared to supply a father's place ; and then thoughts of the past flitted across his mind, and he wished that he had lived more for God and his child, and less for the world. Captain Mowbray watched the countenance of the sufferer ; looking from father to daughter, with a melancholy foreboding that the holy love which bound them so strongly to each other must probably soon be severed. Oh ! would that his own heart were worthier of the hope which he ventured tremblingly to cherish, that he might himself supply that protecting care, which the father would, he feared, so soon be called to resign. But that hope lay secretly within his bosom ; for never would he, by word or act, betray his deep attachment, until he could confess it where, if refused, he might not distress her, by remaining longer near her.

The hymn had ceased. Gertrude crossed to her

father's side, who told her how much her song had pleased him. She knelt down and kissed him, and then entreated that he would not remain longer on the deck, as the dew was beginning to fall. To this he made no objection, and at once retired for the night, accompanied by Captain Mowbray, who had been to him throughout his illness all that a devoted son could be.

Another week brought the vessel nearly to the English channel, when every heart on board felt that never would that voyage be forgotten. It had been enjoyed without a drawback, and something like regret blended with the welcome which hailed the white cliffs of their native land. To Ernest the return was peculiarly painful, as so closely associated with the great trial of his life. And what would Alice Everard be henceforth to Gertrude? Alas! this, too, fell like a painful doubt, and she almost wished that Italy had not been left.

But a change came over the fair spirit of the present calm repose. Lady Gertrude was called up that same night to the bedside of her father; he lay supported on the arm of Ernest Willoughby, while Captain Mowbray chafed his cold pale brow. Paralysis had again attacked him, and his ear was deaf even to the cry of anguish which burst from the lips of his child, as she cast herself down beside him. His last words had been to bless her,

when she left him falling into a gentle sleep ; ~~lits~~
did she dream, that he would never wake again ! The
Earl was dead, and Gertrude was an orphan indeed !
but she knew it not yet, for she had fainted away
before the appalling truth had been revealed !

CHAPTER XIX.

“How oft, beneath His blest and healing wings,
He would have gathered me, and *I would not!*
Like a weak bird, all heedless of my lot,
Perverse and silly in my wanderings!
But now my soul returns, and trembling brings
Her wearied pinions to its wonted rest;
And faint with its long flight and flutterings,
Would seek a refuge in its parent breast!”

ROBY.

IN the long deserted halls of her ancestors, now her own fair inheritance, the Lady Gertrude Austyn lay on a couch of sorrow and suffering. The mortal remains of Lord Errisford reposed in the tomb of his fathers, the achievements of his once powerful mind had passed away for ever! But never had he been so really great, as when, humbled to the dust before his Redeemer, he confessed the errors of his life; never had he so wrought for God, as when his re-


pentant spirit, feeling its own utter helplessness, clung to the strength of Christ, and for the sake of Christ, submitted without a murmur to the will of God, under sufferings and privations, injuries and disappointment ; meekly acknowledging his just need of the very rod which chastened him.

But Gertrude was not alone in her sorrow. Alice Everard sat by her side, and the bright sunshine of their early friendship lighted on their reconciled affections, linking them more closely than ever as sisters to each other. Immediately on receiving the distressing intelligence of the Earl's death, Mr. Everard had hastened to meet the mournful travellers on their arrival at Southampton ; at once to convey the orphan to her "Earlswood home." But, no persuasions could induce her to leave the body of her father, until she had seen him to his last resting-place on earth. Her uncle had, therefore, with his unfailing consideration, written to Alice and Algernon immediately to set off for Warwickshire, that Gertrude might find them awaiting her melancholy return to her birthplace, now desolate indeed !

It was affecting to see, when clasped in each other's arms, the long estranged cousins once more re-united in a sympathy and sorrow such as cast a mantle of oblivion over the memory of mutual wrong. Gertrude, after the first painful struggle was over, kept up better than could have been expected, until

the morning of the funeral, when it became evident that she was perfectly unequal to the effort of attending it, and feeling sensible of this herself, she consented to remain in bed. Captain Mowbray and Mr. Monteith had arrived, to unite with Mr. Everard and Algernon, as chief mourners to the deceased Earl; and mourners they truly were, for to each and all Lord Errisford had greatly endeared himself. Ernest Willoughby alone was absent, and Gertrude too well knew the cause. Gratefully did she appreciate the sympathy and respect manifested by those whom her father most valued when on earth, and this she begged might be communicated to her guests before they again left Austyn Hall, regretting her inability personally to express her acknowledgments.

On the ensuing day, she entered fully into her affairs with Mr. Everard, to whom the Earl had dictated a most touching letter, a few days only before his decease, when, although to the eye of others he appeared better, he had evidently a foreshadowing of approaching death; at all events he had prepared for it, consigning his beloved child to the care of Mr. Everard, leaving him, jointly with Captain Mowbray, trustee of the property, which now devolved upon the young heiress. He confessed having mortgaged his estates to a large amount, he could not exactly say to what extent until he reached England; nevertheless his child was amply provided for,



although, for a time, it would be advisable to nurse the property, that it might be extricated from its heavy encumbrances. All this was gradually told to Gertrude; oh! how deeply did she then reproach herself for her profuse expenditure upon objects calculated, after all, only to foster pride, under the guise of piety. Where were they now? She had at various times drawn upon her father large sums, for mere artistic purposes connected with church architecture. Where were now these costly oblations? The "Home of Peace," at Rosenfield, no longer existed; its Oratory, stripped of its beautiful appendages; and these had been sold piecemeal, to furnish a Roman Catholic chapel. The "Sisters of Mercy" themselves had dispersed; many of them, among whom was poor Clara Mowbray, now a cloistered nun, had gone abroad to different convents with the "Mother Superior," Miss Howard, deserting their fatherland and their faith. Even the splendid "altar cloth," which Gertrude had left in an unfinished state, when summoned hastily from England, had been sent to Austyn Hall, without directions for its care, and consigned to a damp room, shut out alike from air and sun; and there it lay, when accidentally opened, in search of other things, mildewed and moth-eaten! All this expenditure, too, had been lavished at the cost of a parent's peace; for how must such claims have aggravated his pecuniary anxiety! This

was now acknowledged with humility and regret by Gertrude to her uncle, who soothed her mind, by reminding her of the "sweet uses of adversity," if sanctified to the mind, penitent of the past, resolved, for the future, to seek that perfect dependence of soul upon Christ, and Christ alone, which, receiving all through Him, can give back only what is emphatically His own. If works be holy, the holiness is the Lord's, and the will to work is His, for He gave it, that works of righteousness might abound to the glory of God and the redeemed. Surely, then, we can offer no *meritorious claim* upon God, even for the pardon of one sin, or the possession of one grace! If His gifts be abused to worldly purposes, apart from a holy aim, the abuse is wickedness, and the abuser an unfaithful servant; but *duty* is no more merit than restitution of debt is donation, and we can no more claim reward upon the plea of merit than we can claim resurrection because we have had life. The life that is within us is Christ's, for He purchased it with His "precious blood;" and Christ himself is our resurrection, because Christ is our life. Even faith is no merit; it is but the link received from Christ, with which He unites us again to the Father, that we may believe in Him, and so be justified of God. And thus it is that He asks our heart, that He may fill it with His own blessed Spirit; and He asks us to give Him our intellects, that He may en-

lighten them, and thereby the Father be glorified through the Son.

“No, my child,” added Mr. Everard, fervently, “let us build no altars on which to lay our good works, as oblations meet to throw into the balance against our sinfulness. Let love, not slavery, to God, be the sole spring of all our actions, and then obedience to God shall be our happiness ; our shame and sorrow only when that obedience falls short of His commands.”

“Yes, uncle; thank God I see it all clearly now,” said Gertrude ; “but what most deceived me was the dread of the awful powers which I was made to believe were vested in the Church, to remit or retain sins, by giving or withholding its absolution, without which I learnt to imagine that God would neither hear our prayers nor pardon our offences.”

“Ay, that is the strong hold of the Papacy,” replied Mr. Everard, “the chain by which thousands are bound captive to its tyranny. But what saith the Scriptures? We are told that the lepers of Israel were not made whole by any human delegates of the Lord of lords ; for the priests of the tabernacle could but *declare them cleansed*. The healing power, then, as now, lay in the blood of the everlasting covenant, of which the ‘lamb’s blood’ was the type.”

“But, uncle,” said Gertrude, “will you explain

to me how is it that Jesus Christ, himself, gave the 'keys' or power to Peter, 'to bind, or to loose,' the souls of all committed to his charge, and to his successors in the priesthood for ever?"

"Our Lord appointed Peter to open the door of Divine revelation to the Gentiles; and for this, he was gifted with miraculous powers; but that these powers were to be perpetuated in an Apostolic Priesthood, is nowhere declared in Scripture. Hitherto, the Gospel had been preached only to the Jews. To Peter was then given the commission to preach it to the Gentiles; and to him, Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, was miraculously sent by the Lord, to hear that, 'whosoever believeth in Christ, should receive remission of sins.' To Peter *alone* was it said, 'I will give unto *thee* the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever *thou* shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.' In delivering the Gospel to the Gentiles, he 'loosed them from the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish law, and bound them to the simple faith in Jesus Christ, as the alone requisite to salvation.' * Until that moment, it had been shut to all but Jews; but now, the door of the kingdom of Heaven was 'opened to *all* believers.' The keys were needed no more. Henceforth, apostles and ministers of the word, were

* Sermon by Rev. Mr. Blackley.

commissioned, only, to preach salvation to all who exercise simple faith in Jesus Christ. But authority to remit or retain sins is given to none but Jesus, as clearly intimated by the Word of God, where, we are told, that when St. John, the beloved disciple, was exiled at Patmos, the Lord appeared to him in a vision, and said, 'Fear not, for I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and *have the keys of hell and of death.*' It is, to our risen Lord, to whom alone we must flee for remission of sins; for He, only, holds power to open the door of mercy to the penitent; and to close it against the hardened unbeliever. Thus, my precious girl, do we learn from God's own word, that, like the leper, the blood of Christ must first wash us clean, before the Church can pronounce us cleansed. Christ, who is 'alive for evermore,' holds the only key that can unlock the entrance gate to heaven; and he who shall dare seek entrance, by any other door, the same is 'a thief and a robber.'"

"That is just what poor Ernest Willoughby once told me," said Gertrude; "uncle, you know not what he has been to me; what he was, to my dear father; and what would he not be to Alice, if she would but forget the past; and trust the principles, which never can be again perverted, after the bitter experience of a delusion, which cost him so much of inward peace and outward happiness! Dearest

uncle, will *you* not plead in his behalf? You have taken *me* to your heart again, who was far more wilfully perverse; then, be not less generous to him; but, once more, consent to the tie which will unite him to you, as a son, more than ever, worthy of Alice herself."

"My own heart, Gertrude, needs no advocate in the cause for which you plead," replied Mr. Everard, sadly; "but I cannot interfere in a matter touching the most sacred feelings of a woman. Alice has so positively refused to grant what you ask, that, for the present, at least, I would not attempt to influence her. She is a girl of no ordinary character; never biassed by mere impulse, even where her happiness is most concerned. She has refused upon the plea that she could never, again, feel that confidence in the religious steadiness of Ernest, which a wife should repose on one, to whom she must look up for guidance and example in religious principles. She told me this with a moral fortitude and decision, even while her heart seemed, inwardly, breaking under the effort it cost her, that, we must leave the event to time and circumstances, according to the will of God."

Gertrude felt disappointed, but made no further reply: and soon her mind wandered far, as she murmured within herself, "He little knows, how difficult it is, to 'redress' past wrong; but I will

try ; and still pray God to help me.” She remained, for some moments, abstracted in her silent soliloquy, while a faint blush mantled her pale face. The entrance of Alice, however, startled her from thoughts of which she was, in part, so painfully the object.

It was soon finally arranged, that Austyn Hall was to be let for a term of years ; and Lady Gertrude removed, once more, to her “ Earlswood home.” All this she discussed with so much grateful submission to the advice of others, that Mr. Everard could not fail to remark, how greatly improved she was, both in mind and character. Her will was no longer wayward, her temper no longer irritable or sarcastic. She had passed through bitter lessons of experience, which had taught her the essential difference between religion in theory, and practical Christianity ; between the false system of human merits, and the principle of Divine government within the soul, to which she now endeavoured, more and more, to conform. The sad result of her infatuated reliance on Mr. Grey, had, for ever, dissolved the enchantments of a “ vain philosophy.” It had humbled, and brought her under the subjection of a holier influence, and awakened her to the perilous consequences of framing a religion upon the unscriptural doctrines of Papal supremacy ; involving a system of fraud and deception, of which Mr. Grey was a melancholy type. But of him she never

spoke. Past esteem and reverence had given place to indignant contempt, in which pity itself could find no ground of allowance. She did not, could not, know the power of that slavish obedience to vows, which binds the poor Jesuit priest to the tyrant will of his superiors in the Church, and which become, at last, nothing short of abject insanity, where the morbid conscience cannot resist, and yet dares not consent, to a compact with Satanic agency. Or, where no such scrupulous fears intervene, to check the career of blasphemous usurpations, Jesuitism becomes the very impersonation of the "man of sin." The unhappy, but to the last, most amiable, Father Paul, was among the deluded; and who shall say, that reason itself had not been wrecked, amidst the awful conflicts which so often raged within his soul, while combating against convictions, and yet unable to dislodge the master tyranny of superstition? He, who gifted with more than ordinary powers of intellect, and refinement of mind and heart, might have been, under other circumstances, of all men, one of the most extensively useful characters, and, in his own life, perhaps, the happiest. But, his self-directed gifts were perverted, and they became only as means of misleading others, and of ruin to himself!

About a fortnight, subsequently to the funeral of Lord Errisford, Lady Gertrude, who had appeared

to revive, became suddenly attacked with fever, in which, for some days, she lay in a most precarious state. Alice Everard was all that a devoted sister could be to the poor sufferer, whose nervous system had been so shaken, by months of sorrow, anxiety, and disappointment, that her strength seemed unequal to contend against the malady which threatened to overthrow the exhausted powers of nature.

Then it was, that Alice wished, oh! how fervently, that she had shown a kindlier spirit to Gertrude, when, as she had since told her, she desired to make full confession of all wrong towards her, and which would have led to such mutual explanations as might have sealed their reconciliation, and thus have averted, from the beloved sufferer, those deep trials to which she had been exposed in her loneliness; and which might yet, however remotely, prove the very cause of death itself! Poor Alice saw all this now clearly revealed before her; and bitterly did she reproach herself for that pride of heart which made her unforbearing towards another. So painfully did this weigh upon her conscience, when watching beside one bound to her affection by no common ties, that, if, by changing places, she could have saved the life of Gertrude, gladly would she have done so. But never can we so repair the past. We can but pray that God may overrule events, by His own sovereignty, that so the

evils which we fear, and have deserved, may be turned away, and become to us as mercies !

Many days did this anxious watching continue ; but, at length, Gertrude was pronounced out of danger. She could not, however, in herself realize the sanguine expectations of her recovery, which all around her so thankfully expressed ; and, at times, she scarcely wished it ; while at others, youth grasped with tenacious hold the yearnings of nature, for "length of days ;" which, in spite of the sorrowful past, claimed a hope for the future. One morning, after a night of dreams, so often consequent upon that morbid state of the nervous system, which generally follows any serious illness, she fancied that a vision in her sleep had warned her of approaching death. Alice, convinced that her apprehensions were grounded on no substantial cause of alarm, endeavoured to persuade her of the truth ; and succeeded, in partially dispelling the imaginary omen, although she still looked flushed and anxious. After a silence of some minutes, she suddenly raised herself on her elbow, and, looking steadfastly at her cousin, exclaimed, "Alice, dearest, I have much upon my mind. Living, or dying, I cannot be happy, or at peace, until I have made restitution to those whom I have most injured."

Alice took her hand affectionately, and replied, "There is no one, I am sure, my precious Gertrude,

who can have one unforgiving thought towards you. Think no more of the past ; you only make yourself ill, and that is the worst wrong you could do to any of us."

Gertrude shook her head, mournfully ; then, after a moment's pause, exclaimed abruptly, " Alice, I must see Ernest Willoughby. Would it be *very* painful to you, did I send for him ? "

Alice was startled, and turned pale ; but, with great self-command, she replied, " I can object to meet no one, dear Gertrude, whom you may wish to see in your own house ; above all, Ernest Willoughby, who is now no more—never can be—more to me than a brother ; but there is no reason why we should be otherwise than friends. Our first meeting may, and must be, mutually painful, for the moment, but I trust, that with both of us, time has blunted the edge of bitter remembrances."

" Bless you, my Alice, for this," said Gertrude, with a brightened smile ; " how glad shall I be if, indeed, you meet as friends, one day to be again as once you were together."

" *Never*, Gertrude ! " exclaimed Alice, struggling to be calm. " If you desire me to welcome him without reluctance, you must trust upon this no more. Let the past, be past ; if the future is to be one of peace."

" Then have you not forgiven him, Alice ? " asked Gertrude, sorrowfully.


“Freely have I forgiven him, long ago ; and from the first, I could have pardoned all, but the deception practised against me ; and which, perhaps, has left an impression never, wholly, to be removed ; although I trust every feeling of reproof has passed away.”

“Oh ! Alice,” said Gertrude, warmly, “what would become of *us*, if, when pleading for pardon before the throne of grace, our heavenly Father were to say this of you and me ? that He could forgive all but the very sin which, above all others, most needed His pardoning mercy ?”

Alice looked expressively at her cousin, but could not speak. She bent down, and pressing her quivering lips to the forehead of the invalid, she hastily left the room.

Lady Gertrude wrote to Ernest Willoughby that same day, a brief, but urgent request, that he would come to Austyn Hall, without delay, as she was very ill, and wished to see him. This was acknowledged by an immediate reply, such as a brother might address to one who had good right to claim from him a brother's sympathy and service. The next day he was at Austyn Hall.

Mr. Everard, who had been prepared for this visit, was the first to welcome the arrival of Ernest ; and most cordially did he do so, which greatly relieved the long absent one from the painful embarrassments of such an interview ; but it was not until he had been there for more than an hour that



he had the least idea of meeting Alice; the very invitation received from Lady Gertrude had, he thought, sufficiently implied her absence from the Hall. At first, he shrunk from the pain of seeing her; but a little reflection convinced him, that as no cause existed why they should never meet as friends, better was it to conquer the weakness of a moment.

Mr. Everard inwardly sympathized with both, under circumstances of such mutual embarrassment. With his intuitive delicacy and right judgment, he considered it best that the first interview should be accomplished with as little preparation as possible. Leaving Ernest, therefore, standing underneath the veranda, where they had been walking together for some time, he went to seek Alice, whom he found writing in the library, and asked her if she would take a turn with him in the garden. She instantly prepared to do so; and as they approached the hall door, he quietly said, "Ernest Willoughby is come, my love, and wishes to shake hands with you." Poor Alice! Although she had nerved herself for this moment of trial, she changed colour, and her father felt her hand tremble on his arm. She soon, however, regained her self-possession, and, seeing Ernest, she at once walked forward towards him, expressing herself glad to see him. He took her offered hand; while, for her sake, he struggled to control the feelings which well nigh mastered his

resolutions ; but he could only say with deep emotion, " Alice, how are you ? "

Without giving time for reply, Mr. Everard again offered his arm to Alice, who gladly availed herself of its support ; and immediately, turning to Ernest, he began a desultory conversation, quite foreign to their feelings. When they returned to the Hall, after a walk round the lawn, they had regained comparative composure, each one feeling how far greater is any dreaded trial in anticipation, than in actual sufferance. Alice went to her room, thankful that such had been the result of that last painful hour. And now, the great drama of her heart's history was closed ; her remaining life would, please God, run on in an even course of duties, according to His own will.

After dinner, which had passed off better than might have been expected, Ernest was summoned to the presence of Lady Gertrude. She sat in her boudoir, supported in an easy-chair ; long they talked together ; but what passed in that interim we cannot tell. At the expiration of an hour Alice, too, received a message, which she acknowledged, by running up stairs, at once, to her cousin's room ; but on entering she, for a moment, drew back, on seeing Ernest standing, with hands clasping the back of Gertrude's chair, his head bowed down, and firmly pressed against them. Gertrude, however, called

her in, and without further hesitation she obeyed, little dreaming of the ordeal she was there to meet.

"Alice, my best, and dearest, come here," said Gertrude, in a tremulous voice; "I have been confessing to Ernest all the wrong I did him, and have received both his entire forgiveness and consent to all I ask. So far then, as he is concerned, I am happy. But, oh! Alice, on you alone now rests my peace of mind. I may not live to ask aught of you again; will you refuse my earnest prayer, spoken by lips which may soon be silenced in that cold grave where human intercessions can find neither place, nor language?"

"Dearest Gertrude," replied Alice, speaking calmly as she could, and kneeling down affectionately by her side, "speak not thus, I beseech you. Why torment yourself with needless reproaches, with remorse so groundless, when all is passed that was painful, all forgiven, that was more mistaken than unkindly meant? Rouse yourself, my sweet Gertrude, from this morbid distress, which must, indeed, destroy you if thus you give way to it. Dwell not on the past, but rather, let us *all* look forward to brighter days, and be"—she stopped; *happy* she could not say; she only murmured, "—be at peace."

"Oh! that it might be so," exclaimed Gertrude, greatly agitated. "Alice, do you know it was I

who aided in the work of destroying the happiness of two beings, well worthy of each other? Never more can I, at least, know peace, unless I may redress the deep injury which, in my sinful infatuation, I consented to inflict."

"Touch not again on that," interrupted Alice, "if you love me, as I am sure you do."

"Then let me not die with such a weight of remorse upon my conscience, Alice. Oh! let us be once more happy, by being again, as once we were, you, and Ernest, and I together. Say not that you forgive us both, and yet teach us how little you can act upon a generous pardon."

"God is my witness," replied Alice, meekly, "how freely I have forgiven, and do forgive you both. More you cannot, must not ask."

"I *do* ask more," said Gertrude, impatiently; "I ask you to *trust*, as well as to forgive."

"Gertrude, this is cruel of you," said Alice, rising from her kneeling position. "Urge me no more, I beseech you. Once again, I say, let the past, be past; and the future be, as if the past had never been."

An audible, though suppressed groan, was heard from Ernest, who had not once raised his head from its bended attitude against the chair. Gertrude, now roused by this sigh of mental anguish, said, with something of her former petulance, "Then is

poor Ernest right. You have never, never loved him."

"Not *loved* him, Gertrude?" said Alice, looking up, and thrown off her guard; "Ernest knows I have loved him but too well."

Ernest himself now started. Was that sweet voice from heaven, or did he dream? He looked at Alice, when, seeing her turn deadly pale, and lean against a table near her, as if to support her failing limbs, he rushed forward to prevent her falling. He gently took her hand; she did not draw it away. He held it yet longer, and whispered "*My Alice!*" She did not repulse him; a faintness stealing over her, she voluntarily laid her head down up his shoulder, and, for the first time since the mournful day of their separation, now more than two years, tears came to her relief, and she wept, not bitterly, for she wept tears of returning joy.

Gertrude sank upon her knees, and clasping her hands, she exclaimed, "Now *I am happy!* Alice, my darling, may the peace of God reward you; may His blessing unite you two together, for ever, and for ever!"

CHAPTER XX.

Let the gates of light expand,
Awake the circling hours ;
Let mirth and joy come hand in hand,
We claim this day as ours,
To wreath sweet roses for the bride,
And strew her path with flowers.

NEVER did the bells of Glencombe ring out such a peal before, as on a May-day of the year succeeding that which closed upon the incidents of our last chapter ! I have often listened to the sweet music of those bells, rising and falling with the breeze, like an angels' choir, calling the children of earth to prayer and praise, to worship and give thanks, that they might blend with "cherubim and seraphim," in the hallelujahs of a Sabbath-day. But then there was a mellowed sacredness in the sound, as if earth responded to the call, but could only feebly blend with the angelic hosts of heaven.


Not thus mellowed were they now, when never did bells ring such a stunning, downright jocund peal. Never did echo carry their changeful harmony so far and wide, as if the very air teemed with winged sprites, to bear that echo onward further still, from hill to cliff, that every valley and village, hamlet and dale, might send forth their own echoes back to the bells again.

Oh! it was a glorious scene, that wedding-day! The sun moved in its majestic course around a cloudless sky. Nature poured forth her flowers, just opening in time to crown the bride with emblems of blessings, yet more precious than such lovely, but evanescent types. Glencombe was all alive. Groups of children, in mimic garlands of daisies and buttercups, as proud of their floral burdens, as if each daisy were a lily, and every buttercup a rare exotic. The birds, too, flew briskly about, conscious that something worth singing for was going on; and they *did* sing! Their little throats trilled forth such clear, high notes, as if they held good right to outdo the bells. Men and women, boys and girls, were all out and about, dressed in their very best, some among them sporting rosettes of white ribbon, to mark them in office, somehow, for the day's pageantry. But not one soul sat still—they could not! Oh! yes, there was *one* who sat on a large arm-chair, in front of a pretty cottage door. An old, old man,

with hair white as the driven snow, one hand leaning on a stout oak stick, and in the other he held a choice nosegay of exquisite flowers, for which all the hothouses and conservatories in the neighbourhood had been ransacked, that none but the best and rarest blossoms might mingle in the posy destined to be the offering of that patriarchal gardener to the bride, who, from a child, he had ever called his own sweet "lily of the valley."

But whose the bridal which has thus filled every heart with such unmixed and hallowed joy? It was hers, the best and fairest of the glen. It was the wedding-day of Alice Everard and her faithful Willoughby.

The old man sat in a listening posture, for he was nearly blind. Presently a buxom, bustling woman came to his side, exclaiming, "Here they come! Now, Herbert, my man, stand up, and lean on me; the carriage will soon pass; they'll be sure to stop for the posy." But the carriage had stopped already, just at the turn of the road leading to the cottage, and, in a moment afterwards, the woman, half smothered with wonder, called out, "Well, did I ever! Herbert, man! if there bain't Miss Alice herself, looking all the world like a star from heaven, coming up to your own blessed gate! Well, after this bout, you'll be the proudest man as walks the 'arth. Just look at them rude children, sticking to



her like bees, with their daisies and buttercups, so that she can't get on."

The old man stood up, and raised his venerable head to catch a glimpse of the bonny bride; and didn't he feel proud! "Herbert, my dear old Herbert," said the sweet voice of Alice Willoughby, as she drew her hand from the arm of her husband, "we are come to ask your blessing; for I should scarcely feel married without it."

The old man could not speak for joy, and, perhaps, a yet deeper feeling kept him silent for awhile, as he took the hand of Alice, raised it reverently to his lips, and then said, fervently, "May the blessing of Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, bless you, Miss Alice; and you, Master Ernest; with grace, and peace, and length of days, for the Redeemer's sake." Alice was deeply affected, as she took the flowers from the patriarch's hand, pressing it in acknowledgment of thanks which her tongue refused to speak. But Ernest, to relieve the overflowing feelings of both, exclaimed, cheerfully, "Now, Herbert, what do you say for yourself, as a false prophet? Three years ago we were all to die, root and branch, and ——"

"And the sun was 'never to shine again' upon Earlswood, for 'the best of its days were gone,' like the flood, never to come back again!" said Captain Mowbray, as, with Lady Gertrude leaning on his

arm, he made way to the old man, followed by a group of young and happy bridesmaids, who now joined the party before the cottage gate.

Poor old Herbert was half bewildered with all the honours put upon him. Steadily looking up at Captain Mowbray, he said, "I'm sure I've heard that voice before; my eyes often fails me now, but I've seen your face, somehow, too, when and where I can't remember, and, by your speech, sir, it seems you know something of me. May I make so bold as to ask your name?"

"I am called Captain Mowbray," he replied, making the old man sit down again, and stooping over his chair, "which may sound strange to your ears. But do you not remember the traveller who once lost his way among the enchantments of this fairy land, and to whom you gave such hospitable rest, under this very roof?"

"Well, well, to be sure, how things come round, like dreams," answered the old man. "I remember you well enough now, sir, and am glad to see you again. As to the prophecy. Master Ernest, I can't be accountable, for things turning out so different as one thought, just like a tale in a fairy book. All I can say is, the Lord is always better to us than our wicked mistrustings deserve! But where's my hearts-ease among ye all?"

"Oh! here I am, Herbert," exclaimed Lady Ger-

trude, coming foward from the young group clustered behind. "So you ask after me at last, just as I was drooping under the cold shade of your forgetfulness. The lily is all you have thought of this day, with the beautiful posy that is making us all die of envy ; and I am so jealous, that I can be heartsease no more."

"You needn't be jealous, Miss Gertty dear ; for lily and heartsease are alike my pride and my blessings ; may ye both bloom together in Paradise, when the time of your transplanting shall come !"

"I'll tell you a secret, grandsire," shouted Algernon, bounding forward. "True enough, Miss Gertrude is no heartsease ; you may label her henceforth and evermore as the *traveller's joy*."

A merry laugh burst from the whole bridal party, while poor Gertrude, blushing deeply, took shelter behind Captain Mowbray, to whose arm she was clinging. The old man laughed heartily as the rest, as he said, "Ay, ay ; is that the graft she's destined to ? Well, this is all out and out like a story book. Any how, captain, you may be a proud man ; for you'll have the beauty of the garden, as her mother was before her. Ah's me ! but she's got to be a tender plant, somehow ; God bless her ; she is more like the lily now than is her nature."

"That's because you are blind, grandfather," said Algernon ; "for never was a rose so bright as her

checks are at this moment. But here comes the pony chaise, to take you up to the Hall, where you must go, and drink the bride's health. Now don't shake your head, Herbert, and talk nonsense about being too old. Two or three years ago you declared that you might as well promise to drink a vat of wine as a glassful at my wedding-day. Alice has the start of me, to be sure; but you must come and drink the glassful now, and in a few months hence, depend upon it, you will have to try your hand at the vat."

"Well, Master Algy, how should I ever think to see such a day as this? so I'll say nothing agin seeing such another. My times are with the Lord, praised be His holy name!"

The bridal party had moved away, and were just turning the corner where the carriage waited, when Farmer Wilmot, and his sweet-looking Mary, with a fine healthy child in her arms, came forward to meet them, and to tender their heartfelt wishes to both bride and bridegroom, who shook them cordially by the hand, acknowledging their good wishes with gratified cordiality, nor did the baby go without her due share of admiration. Ernest and Alice, then, once more bidding farewell to all around them, drove off, heartily cheered, amidst the blessings of young and old. The rest of the party retraced their way back to Earlswood, where all were to remain that night;

and a merry evening they made of it. Mr. Everard had remained at home, a good deal overcome by the excitements of a trying, though a joyous day ; and Alice herself felt the parting from her beloved father, although only for a few weeks, as too sacred to be in public. Bright was the sunset of his life's evening ; his every earthly wish fulfilled, he still remembered God in his prosperity, and of him it might be truly said, in the words of the Psalmist, " Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright ; for the end of that man is peace."

CONCLUSION.

“So ends my dolorous tale,
And glad am I ’tis ended.”

WORDSWORTH.

LITTLE now remains to be told of a history, from which all may gather an instructive warning, however imperfect is the medium through which it is conveyed. And should my readers, when visiting the wild and beautiful haunts of North Devonshire, find Earlswood in their wanderings, I hope they may see it as I saw it last, while standing beneath the “old oak tree,” I ventured to look down upon a scene which recalled the memory of that happy bridal, which has been so feebly sketched. It was an anniversary of that same wedding-day, and once more I beheld the Earlswood family, grouped on the lawn together, though the circle had expanded, and bright young faces where there, which never had I seen before. Tables were spread out, here and there,

covered with the generous fare of a well ordered feast, for the village poor, who were there to celebrate the grateful event. On the mount, arched by branches of a splendid ash, an awning was suspended over seats ranged carelessly, for the spectators of the rural pastimes below. There sat Mr. Everard, his hair whitened with age indeed, but his countenance unaltered in its sweet expression of benevolence and peace. On one knee he held a blooming infant, the little Harcourt Willoughby, who clapped its tiny hands, with mirthful glee, at the merry songs with which "grandpapa" amused him. Two fairy girls were playing on the grass at his feet; the elder wreathing wild flowers round her cousin, little Catherine Mowbray, whose chief amusement lay in pulling them to pieces, and then laughing archly, as she threw their fragments back again to Alice. Not far from these, our own sweet "Alice of the glen," and Lady Gertrude Mowbray sat together, watching, with mothers' pride, the little ones at their innocent play, which so powerfully recalled the memory of their own happy childhood. Ernest Willoughby and Sir Charles Mowbray walked up and down the terrace, talking over the "days of yore;" and who so happy as themselves? The former, since his marriage, had been the curate of Glencombe; blessed and blessing others, as an earnest, faithful minister of Christ, preaching the Gospel in all simplicity.

while illustrating its powers and holy principles in his own heart and life. Earlswood was his home while Mr. Everard lived to need his children's care, and to him, the living of Glencombe would devolve whenever its venerable incumbent might be called away, to rest from his earthly labours in the Church above. Algernon, now Everard Sydney, was alone absent from the family gathering. He was on a tour round the Lakes ; but not alone. It was his wedding tour, and Dora Stuart was his bride. Nor was the "old man" there. He lay among the sleepers of the cemetery ; heartsease and lilies of the valley, growing side by side, around his lowly grave ; and on the headstone was recorded the name of "William Herbert," who, for more than seventy years, had been "a beloved and faithful servant of the families of Earlswood."

I walked away from the "old oak tree," with a glad feeling of thanksgiving at my heart, that I had seen the righteous rewarded, even in "this their day ;" and I took courage to hope that the "candle of the Lord" shall never be removed from our blessed Anglican *Protestant Church* ; but rather that its holy light shall yet disperse the fast gathering clouds of Satanic agency, which threaten to overshadow England's faith and principles with the darkness of returning idolatry. Oh ! may our beloved country be saved from the shame and the sorrow of

this great national sin! May the Lord stir up the ministers of our Church to proclaim loudly against it; to declare, in the fulness of the Gospel, that Jesus Christ is man's *only* Mediator, the Holy Spirit the soul's *only* Sanctifier, and that all, standing between this perfect atonement, through Christ, and the sinner, is, in itself, sinful in the sight of God.

Oh! then, let every heart within the British dominions, be jealous for England and her *Protestant blessings*. They were purchased by the blood of Christ; they were witnessed by the blood of her own martyred Reformers; and, let us pray, that the Lord may give us power to avenge that blood, by extending the kingdom of Christ, for the sake of which it was so freely shed. But this can only be done by extending the *Gospel of Christ*, until the "dark places of the earth" shall be filled with the glory of God, and the name of Jesus resound in grateful ascriptions from shore to shore, from pole to pole; every heart and every tongue uniting with angels and archangels in the "song of the Lamb!"—"Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty! Who shall not fear Thee, oh! Lord, and glorify Thy name? For *Thou only art holy*."

Then, and then only, shall be fully understood what really constitutes the holy Catholic *Church of God*, or the baptism by which the children of God are *all* "baptized in one Spirit, into one body." And then

shall come to pass that blessed saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and *He shall reign* for ever and ever!"

C. A.

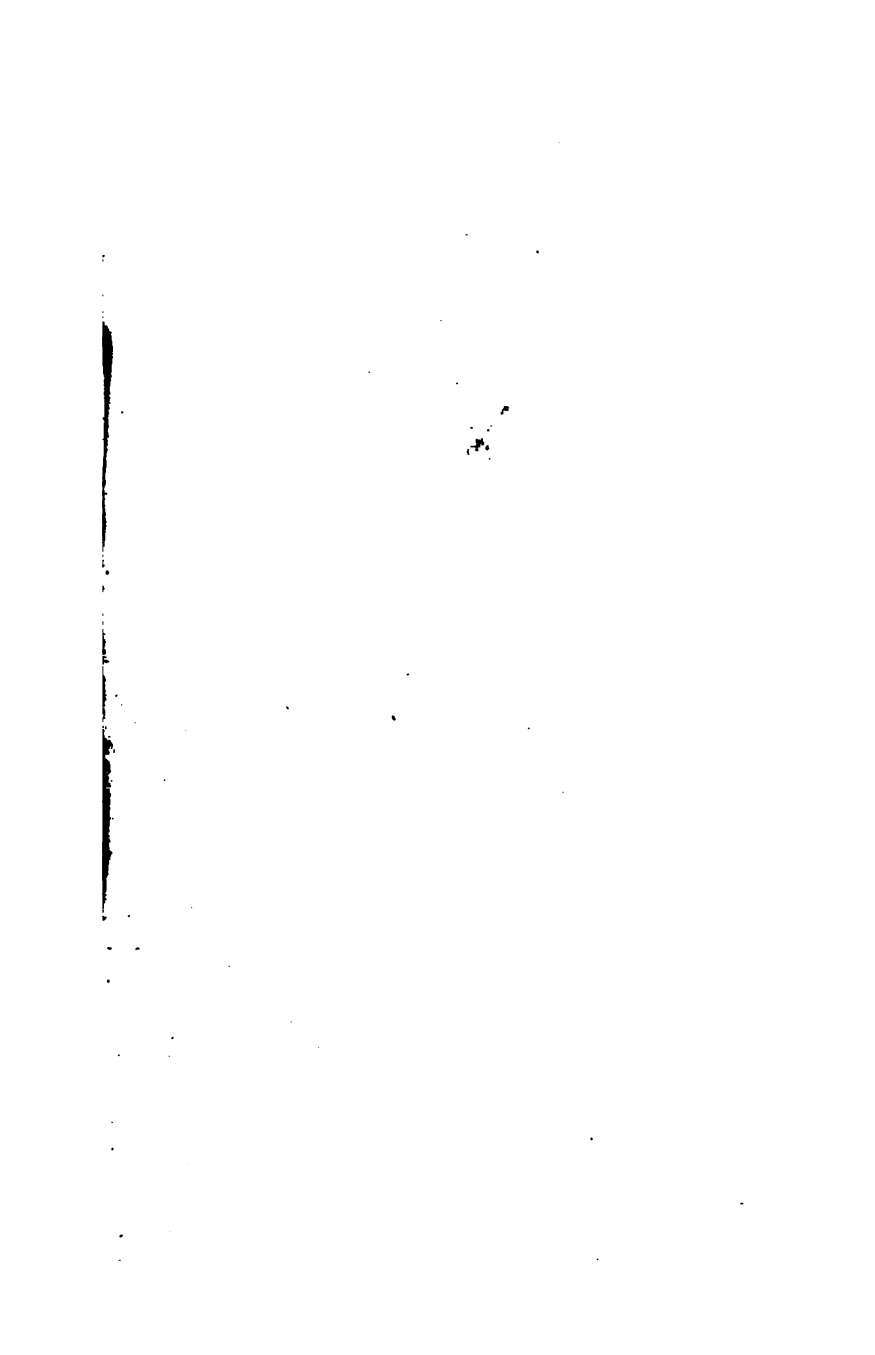
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